

Changing the State's Story: Continuity and Change in Official Narratives of Dark Past

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

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Fall 2011

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## Abstract

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In the past few decades, there has been a striking increase in demands for apologies for a variety of wrongs committed in the past, including genocide, mass killing, ethnic cleansing and slavery. These calls for apology and reevaluations of the past have led to a dramatic increase in the establishment of truth-seeking institutions and in apologies for past wrongs. And yet, in spite of these trends, the world has witnessed neither a wave of apologies by states responsible for past atrocities nor the end of narratives of impunity. Instead, while some states have looked into and apologized for past crimes, many others continue to silence, deny, whitewash, rationalize and relativize dark pasts. Given the tremendous variation in the degree to which different states have tried to come to terms with dark pasts, it seems evident that the processes shaping such narratives involve more than just the dynamics sketched above. In particular, while these trends have pushed some states to look into dark pasts and have led others to apologize for past wrongs, these international processes have not had a similar impact on all states with dark pasts. This prompts questions about how states' narratives of past atrocities are created and changed. A central question and the core focus of this dissertation is: What are the sources of change and continuity in states' narratives of past crimes?

This theory-building dissertation investigates how states' narratives about dark pasts are shaped and contested over time. Employing macro-historical analysis, this project traces the trajectories over the past sixty years of Turkey's narrative of the 1915-17 Armenian Genocide and Japan's narrative of the 1937-38 Nanjing Massacre. My findings are based on more than eight months of fieldwork, during which I conducted approximately 75 interviews in Turkey, Japan and the US, gathered primary sources in Turkish archives and libraries, and compiled and analyzed news accounts related to both cases. I have also developed a conceptual continuum with which to measure and compare official narratives.

At its core, this research focuses on the processes that shape states' narratives of past atrocities, and explores how state actors negotiate between the demands of various domestic and international audiences in producing and maintaining such narratives. The central argument advanced in this dissertation is that while international pressures can increase the likelihood of change in official narratives of dark pasts, domestic actors largely determine the content of such

change. Specifically, international pressure, both by third parties and victim states, is the most frequent trigger for changes in states' narratives. Such pressure can challenge the domestic legitimacy of an official narrative and/or change the cost-benefit calculus underlying it, which can lead official actors to consider whether and how to change an official narrative. These considerations, however, are further influenced by officials' ideational concerns and by political factors within the domestic context, along with the nature of diplomatic relations and the relative balance of power between the pressuring state and the perpetrator state (if applicable.)

This project uncovers political dynamics that reach beyond the two cases studied, making central contributions to the literature on the diffusion of international ideas and their impact on states' practices, to interdisciplinary scholarship on transitional justice and memory politics, and to a growing body of scholarship in the field of Turkish studies. My central argument fills a gap in scholarship on memory studies and transitional justice by theorizing the nature and sources of change in *official* narratives. In particular, it contrasts with work that emphasizes factors within *either* the international *or* the domestic sphere, with work that focuses on single in-depth case studies, and with work that focuses on particular indicators or domains of contestation. The conceptual continuum that I have developed is also a valuable tool that can be used by other scholars who study historical memory to compare narratives over time and across cases. This research also contributes to international relations scholarship on the diffusion and impact of international norms on states' practices by identifying whether, how and why state actors resist and respond to norm-inspired pressures. In addition, while I find that international normative factors do not have as measurable or clear of an influence on official narratives as international pressures and domestic political dynamics, I also find that norms can influence and be leveraged by supporters *as well as* opponents of change. In addition to these theoretical contributions, my analysis of the evolution of Turkey's narrative of the Armenian Genocide constitutes the first systematic analysis of the official historiography of the Armenian Genocide. This contributes to the emerging literature on the history and historiography of the genocide, which is an understudied and important topic in Turkish studies. And finally, this research will be of interest to policymakers who are confronted with controversies over past atrocities by shedding light on the longer-term dynamics set off by pressures on and changes in official narratives.

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## List of Acronyms

AKP	<i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i> , Justice and Development Party
ARF-D	Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaksutyun
ASALA	Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia
ASAM	<i>Avrasya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi</i> , Eurasian Strategic Studies Institute
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASİMKK	<i>Asılsız Soykırım İddiaları ile Mücadele Koordinasyon Kurulu</i> , Committee to Coordinate the Struggle with the Baseless Genocide Claims
ATAA	Assembly of Turkish-American Associations
ATASE	<i>Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı</i> , Directorate of Military History and Strategic Studies
CHP	<i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i> , Republican People's Party
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress, <i>İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti</i>
DTP	<i>Demokratik Toplum Partisi</i> , Democratic Society Party
DYP	<i>Doğru Yol Partisi</i> , True Path Party
EEC	European Economic Community
EP	European Parliament
ERAREN	<i>Ermeni Araştırmaları Enstitüsü</i> , Institute for Armenian Research
EU	European Union
FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information Service
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GONGO	Government-Sponsored Non-Governmental Organization
hYd	<i>Helsinki Yurttaşlar Derneği</i> , Helsinki Citizens' Assembly
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITS	Institute of Turkish Studies
İAGM	<i>İstihbarat ve Araştırma Genel Müdürlüğü</i> , Directorate General of Intelligence and Research

İHD	<i>İnsan Hakları Derneği</i> , Human Rights Foundation of Turkey
JCP	Japanese Communist Party
JQ	<i>Japan Quarterly</i>
JSDF	Japan Self-Defense Forces
JSP	Japan Socialist Party
JWRC	Center of Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MAZLUMDER	<i>İnsan Hakları ve Mazlumlar için Dayanışma Derneği</i> , Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People
MEB	<i>Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı</i> , National Education Ministry
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MGK	<i>Milli Güvenlik Kurulu</i> , National Security Council
MHP	<i>Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi</i> , Nationalist Action/Movement Party
MİT	<i>Milli İstihbarat Teşkilâtı</i> , National Intelligence Organization
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PKK	<i>Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan</i> , Workers' Party of Kurdistan
PM	Prime Minister
POW	Prisoners of War
ROK	Republic of Korea
RP	<i>Refah Partisi</i> , Welfare Party
TABDC	Turkish-Armenian Business Development Council
TARC	Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission
TBMM	<i>Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi</i> , Turkish Grand National Assembly
TESEV	<i>Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı</i> , Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation
TTK	<i>Türk Tarih Kurumu</i> , Turkish Historical Society
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
USD	US Dollars
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WATS	Workshop for Armenian / Turkish Scholarship
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II
YÖK	<i>Yükseköğretim Kurulu</i> , Council of Higher Education

## Acknowledgements

Researching and writing this dissertation has been a long journey that necessarily involved many others. Over the course of the past several years, I have received advice, encouragement and support from colleagues, old and new friends, advisors and many people whom I met in the course of my field research in Turkey and Japan. Without their help, this dissertation would have been impossible to write.

I would first like to thank my advisors – Margaret Lavinia Anderson, Ron E. Hassner, T.J. Pempel and Gordon Silverstein – for their advice, encouragement and feedback, along with their willingness to be involved in a project that was sometimes only tangentially related to their own interests and expertise. Over the past several years, Ron Hassner’s professional advice has helped socialize me to the profession of political science, his feedback and suggestions have helped draw out the international relations angles in my increasingly comparative dissertation, and his feedback on my written work has pushed me to hone my arguments until they had sufficient punch and focus. In addition, Ron’s enthusiasm has made having him as my advisor a fabulous experience, as he might say. I took my first class with Gordon Silverstein as a freshmen at Dartmouth College many years ago, and it was through serendipity that we both arrived at Berkeley in 2003 and that I have been able to take two graduate seminars with Gordon and have him advise my dissertation. Gordon’s encouragement and enthusiasm for my project has helped nurture it from a vague interest to a clear research question, and on to a fully fleshed-out project. Moreover, our discussions about my dissertation have been helpful in sounding out and developing nascent ideas, and as my chapters have taken shape, he has given me helpful feedback, particularly on how to more clearly and persuasively present my arguments. Peggy Anderson has been a wonderful advisor, especially given that she has been my ‘outside’ committee member. She has been interested in my project from when I first approached her as I prepared my prospectus, and since then I have at times been struck with my luck in having found such a committed advisor, and one whose own work intersects with the substance of mine. In particular, Peggy has given me thorough feedback on my written work, helping both to improve my writing and clarify my arguments. Finally, I have been lucky to have T.J. Pempel on my committee. I have appreciated his help with my research in Japan, his feedback on my work on the Japanese case, and his tremendous expertise and experience.

The past two years that I have spent at Harvard have been invaluable, helping me crystallize and develop my arguments and writing, exposing me to a wide range of research in the field of international relations, introducing me to an amazing group of international relations scholars, and affording me access to the university’s tremendous resources. Among the faculty, I have been particularly grateful for the advice and friendship of Kelly Greenhill, as well as for feedback and suggestions from Steve Walt, Steve Miller, Monica Duffy Toft, Sean Lynn-Jones, and Bob Rotberg. Among the fellows I have met in the International Security Program and in the broader academic community, I have been glad to get to know and exchange ideas and feedback with Chiara Ruffa, Michal Ben-Josef Hirsch, Ursula Jasper, Melissa Willard-Foster, Jonathan Renshon, Jennifer Keister, Sarah Zuckerman, Peter Krause, Rose Kelanic, Patrick Johnston, Teresa Cravo, Yvonne Malan, Ragnhild Nordås, Jacqueline Hazelton, and Maria Koinova.



In addition to my formal advisors, I benefitted at various points from conversations and advice from Steve Vogel, Jason Wittenberg, Yamanaka Keiko, Amy Gurowitz, David Art, Melissa Nobles, David Mendeloff, Jennifer Lind, and Devrim Yavuz. I would also like to thank Nicole Watts, Stephan Astourian, and Cihan Tuğal for their advice early on in my research, and specifically for their suggestions related to my research in Turkey. More recently, I have benefitted from conversations with Marc Mamigonian, along with feedback from Fuat Dündar and Taner Akçam. In addition, I would like to thank Fatma Müge Göçek for her long involvement in the WATS email list, of which I was a member from 2006 until its recent closure, and from which I learned a tremendous amount and established contact with a number of people whose work relates to mine.

I am grateful to HIWATARI Nobuhiro for hosting me as a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Social Science at the University of Tokyo, and for generously helping me find a research assistant and identify potential interviewees. Without his help, my research in Tokyo would have been much less successful. I would also like to thank my research assistant in Tokyo, whose help and increasing interest in my research were very much appreciated. In addition, I would like to thank Greg Noble at the University of Tokyo and Steve Reed at Chuo University for valuable conversations about my research plans and findings.

One of the best parts of my graduate experience has been all of the friends that I have made, especially at Berkeley. I am so glad to have become friends with Rachel Stern and Susanne Wengle, both of whom have been good friends (and colleagues!) In addition, it has been wonderful to develop friendships and share the ups and downs of graduate school with Şener Aktürk, Dann Naseemullah, Ken Haig, Els de Graauw, Martha Johnson, Zach Zwald, Brent Durbin, Regine Spector, Jon Chow, Jen Brass, Sam Handlin, Jon Hassid and Celeste Arrington.

In addition, Andrea Rex, Ellen Borrowman, Bette Evans and Gina Farales each helped smooth the many administrative details over the course of my graduate career at Berkeley, as has Susan Lynch at Harvard.

I would particularly like to thank all of the people who were willing to be interviewed as part of my research, without whom I would not have been able to connect the dots in my research or as fully understand the dynamics and motivations that have shaped each narrative's trajectory over the past several decades. I am also grateful for the friends that I made in the course of my research in Japan and Turkey, without whom my fieldwork would have been much lonelier.

For funding that supported my research, I am grateful to the Department of Political Science, the European Union Center of Excellence, the Institute of East Asian Studies, the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, and the Graduate Division at UC Berkeley. I am also grateful for funding from the UC Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, and to the Institute of Social Science at the University of Tokyo for sponsoring me during my research in Tokyo in June and July 2008. Beyond this funding support, I would like to thank Seyhan Bayraktar and Wolfgang Seibel at the Institute for Advanced Study at the University of Konstanz, Amy Gurowitz at Berkeley's Institute of International Studies, António Costa Pinto at the University of Lisbon's Institute of Social Sciences, the Irmgard Coninx Foundation, Devrim Yavuz and Anny Bakalian at the Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center at CUNY's Graduate Center, and Marc

Mamigonian at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research for opportunities to present my research.

Finally, I need to thank my parents and my sister, who have supported and encouraged me throughout graduate school and during my many trips to Turkey, Germany and elsewhere. All of this would have been much more difficult if not for their love and trust in me and my ability to succeed in this endeavor. In addition, my oldest friends, Diana and Liz, have helped me to laugh and get outside my head many times over the past several years. And most importantly, I am grateful to have shared this experience with Toby, who has been with me through every step of this process – if not always on the same continent! His faith in me, encouragement, support, friendship and love have helped me get to this point.

– Chapter 1 –  
**Introduction: Coming to Terms with Dark Pasts?**

***Introduction***

According to some scholars and commentators, we have entered an age of apology and truth-telling (Gibney et al. 2007; Brooks 1999). In the past few decades, there has been a striking increase in demands for apologies for a variety of wrongs committed in the past, including genocide, mass killing, ethnic cleansing and slavery. These historic wrongs include those committed by governments, companies and transnational organizations, and involve many different types of victim groups. States have been the focus of domestic and international scrutiny for ways in which aspects of their pasts are remembered and commemorated (Marrus 2007: 76; Nobles 2008: 4). Accompanying these trends have been movements to uncover the ‘truth’ of such historic wrongs, which some argue facilitates healing for victims and reconciliation between victims, perpetrators and bystanders. This has been manifested in the emergence and consolidation of a ‘norm of truth seeking’ (Ben-Josef Hirsch 2009), and in the international criminal justice regime that has developed over the past twenty years to prosecute states and their leaders for crimes against humanity.

These calls for apology and reevaluations of the past have led to a dramatic increase in the establishment of truth-seeking institutions and in apologies for past wrongs (Warner 2002; Weyeneth 2001). For example, in 1995 the Japanese Prime Minister MURAYAMA Tomiichi conveyed his deep remorse and heartfelt apology to the victims of Japan’s World War II-era colonial rule and aggression (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1995). And in 2008 the Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd issued a formal apology to Australian aborigines for their past mistreatment by the Australian government (*BBC News* 2008). Forty-six truth commissions have been set up in 38 countries since 1974,<sup>1</sup> twenty-three of which were set up in the decade after 1996 (Ben-Josef Hirsch et al. 2010: 6).

Unsurprisingly, however, and in spite of these trends and this emerging international normative regime, the world has witnessed neither a wave of apologies by states responsible for past atrocities nor the end of narratives of impunity. Instead, while some states and leaders have looked into and apologized for past crimes, many others continue to silence, deny, whitewash, rationalize and/or relativize dark pasts. Given the tremendous variation in the degree to which different states have tried to come to terms with dark pasts, it seems evident that the processes shaping such narratives involve more than just the dynamics outlined in the past couple of paragraphs. While these trends have pushed some states to look into dark pasts and have led others to apologize for past wrongs, these international processes have not had a similar impact on all states with dark pasts. This prompts questions about how states’ narratives of past atrocities are created and changed. A central question and the core focus of this dissertation is: What are the sources of change and continuity in states’ narratives of past crimes? This breaks down into several sub-questions: First, what factors lead states to change their narratives of dark pasts? Second, what factors prevent states from changing such narratives? Third, what are the

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<sup>1</sup> This number was arrived at using several sources: Ben-Josef Hirsch et al. 2010; United States Institute of Peace; Amnesty International. Eight countries have had two truth commissions.

mechanisms that reinforce continuities in official narratives? Finally, what are the processes through which states' narratives are shaped and change over time?

Using a qualitative, process-tracing approach, this theory-building dissertation answers these questions through a macro-historical analysis of the trajectories of Turkey's narrative of the Armenian Genocide and Japan's narrative of the Nanjing Massacre over the past sixty years.<sup>2</sup> Over the course of more than eight months of field research, I conducted approximately 75 interviews in Turkey, Japan and the US, gathered primary sources in Turkish archives and libraries, and compiled and analyzed news accounts related to both cases. I have also developed a conceptual continuum with which to measure and compare official narratives. Using my continuum, I have traced how each narrative has evolved over time.

In the past sixty years, Turkey's narrative has shifted from denying and silencing the genocide, to relativizing and mythmaking about the events (along with continuing to deny and silence), to acknowledging some basic facts. At the same time, however, government officials have developed and adapted strategies to defend their narrative, such that these shifts have been accompanied by a remarkable degree of continuity in the narrative's basic tenets. In contrast, Japan's narrative has exhibited a greater degree of change. Since 1952, it has moved from a baseline that was quite similar to Turkey's, to gradually acknowledging the event, the harm suffered by victims in the massacre, and Japanese responsibility for this harm. Moreover, since the mid-1990s, Japan's narrative has included general apologies for its past aggression and crimes, including the Nanjing Massacre. Thus while there are a number of similarities between the two cases, Japan's narrative has changed much more than Turkey's narrative. My project answers the general questions posed above through a close analysis of these two cases, identifying the sources of change and continuity in each narrative, and comparing and contrasting the trajectories of these two narratives to yield broader insights.

### ***My arguments***

Taking a comparative, interdisciplinary, cross-regional approach, this project offers an integrating framework that captures how political factors at the domestic and international levels influence states' narratives. My central argument is that *while international pressures can increase the likelihood of change in official narratives of dark pasts, domestic actors largely determine the content of such change*.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, international pressure, both by third parties and victim states, is the most frequent trigger for changes in states' narratives. Such pressure can challenge the domestic legitimacy of an official narrative and/or change the cost-benefit calculus underlying it, which can lead official actors to consider whether and how to change an official narrative. These considerations, however, are further influenced by officials' ideational concerns and by political factors within the domestic context, along with the nature of diplomatic relations

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<sup>2</sup> My analysis of the Turkish narrative begins in 1950, when the period of single-party rule ended, while my analysis of the Japanese narrative begins two years later, in 1952, when the US occupation of Japan formally ended and Japan regained its sovereignty.

<sup>3</sup> 'Dark pasts' is an evocative term that is intended to capture the fact that the state whose narrative is being analyzed was the perpetrator (rather than the victim) in the underlying historical event. The set of cases to which my findings apply are perpetrator states' narratives about past events of genocide and mass killing. I say more about the scope conditions later in this chapter.

and the relative balance of power between the pressuring state and the perpetrator state (if applicable.)

Building on the literature on institutional change and feedback effects,<sup>4</sup> I conceive of official narratives as institutions, and focus in particular on the domestic actors that constitute these institutional domains, the processes by which these institutions are perpetuated over time, and the mechanisms through which change is effected. One focus of my research is on the actions and motivations of state actors. I demonstrate that, while government officials largely control the production of such narratives, their decisions about a narrative's content are not insulated from other pressures. In particular, my research reveals that the level of involvement of official actors in the production and defense of official narratives varies across national cases and over time within a single case. I further identify the material and ideational factors that shape this variation, arguing that state actors are more likely to defend and resist change in an official narrative if the narrative functions as a source of legitimacy for the state, state institutions or government officials; and/or if such change would threaten important sources of political support for the state, the regime or particular political actors. Turning to the broader set of actors within the domestic context, I argue that societal actors can influence the content and direction of change in an official narrative in two ways: *directly*, by bringing new pressure on the official narrative and/or on the state actors who produce the official narrative; and *indirectly*, by changing the understanding of the event among elites and/or the public, and thereby shaping the context within which the official narrative is produced. Moreover, societal actors can help to reinforce officials' commitment to the status quo, or can generate new pressures for change in the narrative. I also illustrate how the production of or changes in such narratives can generate both ideational and material feedback effects, via societal as well as official actors. Finally, my analysis reveals that the *nature* of change in states' narratives is often incremental and frequently involves a process of *layering*, whereby new themes are added onto the existing narrative, in order to adjust to new pressures or to shift its content without eliciting domestic opposition.

This research contributes to several literatures. First, this research contributes to international relations scholarship on the diffusion and impact of international norms on states' practices by identifying whether, how and why state actors resist and respond to norm-inspired pressures. In addition, while I find that international normative factors do not have as measurable or clear of an influence on official narratives as international pressures and domestic political dynamics, I also find that norms can influence and be leveraged by supporters *as well as* opponents of change. Second, my central argument fills a gap in scholarship on memory studies and transitional justice by theorizing the nature and sources of change in *official* narratives. In particular, my research contrasts with work that emphasizes factors within *either* the international *or* the domestic sphere, with work that focuses on single in-depth case studies, and with work that focuses on particular indicators or domains of contestation. In addition, my conceptual continuum is a valuable tool that can be used by other scholars who study historical memory and narratives to measure and compare the content of narratives over time and across cases. Third, my analysis of the evolution of Turkey's narrative of the Armenian Genocide constitutes the first systematic analysis of the official historiography of the Armenian Genocide. This contributes to the emerging literature on the history and historiography of the genocide,

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<sup>4</sup> Thelen 1999; Streeck and Thelen 2005; Pierson 1993, 2000 and 2004; Skrentny 1996; Skocpol 1992; Farrell and Newman 2010; Mettler 2005; Mettler and Welch 2004.

which is an understudied and important topic in Turkish studies. Finally, my research will be of interest to policymakers who are confronted with controversies over past atrocities by shedding light on the longer-term dynamics set off by pressures on and changes in official narratives. In particular, my findings offer valuable insights for policymakers and activists who work on the Turkish narrative. And in addition to the two cases studied in this project, my findings should apply more broadly to a range of official narratives of genocide and mass killing, including France and Austria's narratives of their involvement in the Holocaust, Burundi's narrative of the genocide of ethnic Hutus in 1972, Cambodia's narrative of the 1975-79 genocide, and Serbia's narratives of the Bosnian War and the 1995 genocide in Srebrenica.

The remainder of this chapter introduces the central elements of the project, which are further developed and substantiated in the subsequent chapters. The chapter proceeds as follows: In the next section, I discuss why this is an important topic, laying out the stakes for domestic and international politics, as well as for the particular cases studied in this project. In the section that follows, I outline existing scholarship that relates to the questions posed above, identifying relevant insights as well as shortcomings or lacunae. I then describe the research design and methodology, the cases and logic of their selection, and the research conducted. The chapter concludes with a summary of the dissertation chapters.

### *The stakes*

So why does this matter? There are a number of compelling reasons to investigate the processes that shape a state's narrative of past atrocities. Nationalist narratives about past conflicts and histories can cause misperceptions and increase threat perceptions between states (Mendeloff 2008; Lind 2008), as Turkey and Greece have shown for much of the past half-century, and especially since the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. Nationalist narratives can also be used by leaders to justify going to war to skeptical or ambivalent domestic publics (Kaufmann 2004; Kull et al. 2003-2004), and can lead states into war (Van Evera 1994; Snyder and Ballentine 1996: 11). Most troublingly, chauvinist narratives of past conflicts can create tensions and prejudices that contribute to future conflict and even atrocities (Herwig 1987: 43; Üngör 2008: 20-21), as illustrated by the regional conflict in the Great Lakes region of Africa, which has in part been driven by grievances that are fanned by narratives of the 1972 genocide and 1993 massacres of Hutus in Burundi, and the 1994 Rwandan Genocide (Prendergast and Smock 1999).

On the domestic front, narratives of dark pasts often become part of the overall narrative of national identity that is constructed in the wake of conflict or atrocity (e.g., Bell 2006: 11-15). This is prominently the case in the national identities constructed in Rwanda in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, in Germany after the Holocaust,<sup>5</sup> and in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia in the wake of the conflict and ethnic cleansing during the collapse of the former Yugoslavia (Levy 2009). Narratives of dark pasts also contribute to the delineation of the boundaries of public discourse (Art 2006), citizenship (Nobles 2008) and belonging in perpetrator states. Moreover, narratives of past conflicts and atrocities can be used and manipulated by political actors for diverse ends within domestic politics, and can particularly be used by 'ethnic entrepreneurs' to

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<sup>5</sup> Fulbrook 1999; Markovits and Reich 1997; Moeller 2003; Warburg 2010.

stir up nationalist and ultranationalist sentiments.<sup>6</sup> Much as national narratives can contribute to increased tensions between states, they can also contribute to the creation or hardening of boundaries between ‘in-groups’ and ‘out-groups’ within the domestic sphere. This can cause domestic unrest and rebellion, and can lead to the persecution or repression of an ‘out-group.’ For example in Rwanda today, the president, Paul Kagame “justifies his stifling of debate, and the suppression of opponents, as a necessary evil in a country where the freedom to whip up ethnic hatred has taken so heavy a toll” (Burgis 2010).

Beyond the general applicability of this research to importance aspects of domestic politics and international relations, the particular narratives studied in this project – Turkey’s official narrative of the 1915-17 Armenian Genocide, and Japan’s official narrative of the 1937-38 Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War (1931-45) – remain salient to a better understanding of each of these countries’ politics.<sup>7</sup> It would be easy to think that because these events happened so far in the past – over 70 years ago in the Japanese case, and nearly a century ago in the Turkish case – that they would by now have faded in political importance and in emotional resonance. Yet, if one follows news related to Turkish or Japanese politics, the presence of these long-ago events in contemporary politics is amply evident. To give a couple of examples: In late December 2008 a member of the Turkish Parliament from the now-closed, ethnically-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*, DTP) proposed in a Parliamentary budget meeting that the legislature should apologize to Armenians for the ‘events of 1915.’ In making his proposal, this member of parliament (MP) used the Kurdish word for genocide and mentioned stories of the massacre of Armenians that he had heard while growing up. While speaking, he was interrupted and accused by another MP of ‘insulting the society in which he lives.’ When a fellow MP from the DTP then defended the original statements, a member of the governing Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP or *AK Parti*) began screaming at them.<sup>8</sup> While a fight was prevented, the emotional responses from these lawmakers highlight how raw these issues remain. And in the case of Japan, Chinese officials were so incensed by the Japanese Prime Minister KOIZUMI Junichiro’s official visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, which China (along with other countries) perceived as symbolically whitewashing of Japan’s war crimes, that they refused to hold a formal bilateral meeting with Koizumi for the last few years that he was in office. During this period (2001-2006), bilateral relations between Japan and China (as well as between Japan and South Korea) deteriorated dramatically, in large part due to Koizumi’s shrine visits (Vatikiotis 2004; Alford 2005). Thus, instead of fading with time and the erosion of living memories, these issues continue to frame political issues within and outside these states in significant ways.

Turkey’s official position on the ‘Armenian question,’ as the issue is termed in Turkey, has caused diplomatic disputes that threaten its own interests, along with those of its allies. For example, while Turkey’s recognition of the genocide is not a formal precondition to full membership in the European Union (EU), if Turkey’s narrative does not change, it will likely

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<sup>6</sup> See, e.g.: Naimark 2001; Snyder and Ballentine 1996; Van Evera 1994. Cesarini and Hite note that “in societies that fail to confront the past adequately, ample room is left for ‘memory entrepreneurs’ to reignite unresolved battles over memory for particularistic purposes” (2004: 17). Aguilar and Hite similarly argue that, “in the Spanish case, ... the absence of public debate about the authoritarian past through the last quarter-century has permitted political actors to manipulate the past as a political weapon” (2004: 194).

<sup>7</sup> Since I discuss the cases and case selection logic later in the chapter, I only sketch their political importance here.

<sup>8</sup> *Asbarez News* 2008; *Atılım* 2008; *Radikal* 2008.

continue to be used as a justification for some EU member-states' and politicians' objections to Turkey's becoming a full member. Moreover, when EU member-states formally recognize the genocide, as Sweden did in March 2010, it provides fodder for Turkish nationalists to rally public opinion against Turkey's EU candidacy. In the absence of change in the official narrative, such nationalist agitation can increase the political costs for Turkish leaders of making the difficult reforms demanded by the EU. This issue has also negatively affected Turkey's relationships with key allies, including the United States (US). For example, when the US Congress has considered resolutions calling on Turkey to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide (as such), Turkish officials' negative reactions have threatened to undermine aspects of the strong military ties between Turkey and the US. For example, in late 2007 the US House of Representatives considered a resolution (HR 106) that would have recognized the Armenian Genocide. Turkey threatened to withdraw US access to Turkish military bases, which were heavily used in the war in Iraq, if the resolution passed and to allow its military to aggressively pursue Kurdish rebels in Northern Iraq, which US officials (then) feared could upset the fragile relative calm there. More generally, these resolutions and Turkey's visceral reaction to them regularly strain bilateral relations in ways that are undesirable to diplomats in both countries.

For Japan, international disagreements over its official narrative have even more seriously and regularly affected relations with its neighbors, many of whom are former victims of Japanese aggression and atrocities. In addition to the example given above, which was damaging to the interests of both Japan and China, Koizumi's repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine (along with other signs of revisionism in Japan) were a major factor in Asian countries' lack of support for Japan's formal bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations (UN) Security Council in 2005. Thus in April 2005, China announced that it would "not endorse Tokyo's UN ambitions efforts [sic] until it 'clarifies some historic issues'" (McNeill and Selden 2005). Shortly thereafter, the Chinese Premier WEN Jiabao further warned: "Only a country that respects history and wins over the trust of peoples in Asia and the world at large can take greater responsibilities in the world community" (Edwards 2005).

Moreover, disputes over history issues<sup>9</sup> have negatively affected trade and economic relations for both Turkey and Japan. For example, in 2005 there were widespread boycotts of Japanese products in China, in direct response to a Ministry of Education decision that was perceived to whitewash Japan's World War II crimes, including the Nanjing Massacre.<sup>10</sup> In the Turkish case, the denial of the genocide is a central issue complicating the resumption of diplomatic relations with Armenia. Moreover, the closed border has increased transportation costs for Turkish goods exported to the Caucasus and Russia, has contributed to the impoverishment of the Turkish towns and cities bordering Armenia, and has hindered the economic development of the poor and landlocked country of Armenia.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The phrase 'history issue/s' is commonly used to refer to controversies related to Japan's public and/or official memories of and/or acceptance of responsibility for WWII-related atrocities and aggression.

<sup>10</sup> *Xinhua Financial Network News* 2005; Lewis 2005; Sang-Hun 2005.

<sup>11</sup> While as a much poorer country Armenia would most clearly benefit from improved relations with Turkey, the closed land border with Armenia is also a detriment to the regions of Turkey that lie along the border and financially suffer from the obstacles to cross-border trade (Bokestijn 2005). See also Tocci et al. 2007.



Finally, both of these narratives are intertwined with fundamental issues and dividing lines within each country. As such, controversy and contestation over each official narrative have distorted and complicated other political questions, such as constitutional revision in Japan and the improvement of minority rights and freedom of speech in Turkey.

### *Existing explanations*

Given the relevance of these issues to each country's domestic and international politics, what can we draw from existing research in approaching the questions raised above? Existing scholarship offers insights from different vantage points. One body of scholarship sheds light on the impact of international norms on states' practices, while a second set of research identifies various factors that lead to changes in states' narratives of dark pasts. As I will argue, however, neither approach sufficiently answers the questions posed above. Crucially, there is little work that systemically and comparatively probes the sources of change and continuity in states' narratives, and that gives equal consideration to domestic and international factors in shaping such narratives.

### *International relations literature*

Research on the international spread of ideas, which has developed over the past couple of decades, offers some answers. Scholarship bridging the sub-fields of international relations and comparative politics has shown a number of different ways in which policy ideas, such as the norm of truth-seeking and the norm against impunity for gross human rights violations, spread and many states seemingly 'converge' on a similar policy approach (Holzinger et al. 2008; Sharman 2008), such as establishing truth commissions or issuing an official apology for a past crime. Arguments have focused on a variety of actors, including: networks of experts (Haas 1992), international organizations (Finnemore 1996), regional organizations, transnational movements and activists,<sup>12</sup> other states, and even treaties (Simmons 2009). Moreover, the mechanisms that facilitate diffusion and convergence include: incentives and conditionality (Schimmelfennig et al. 2006), socialization,<sup>13</sup> competition, emulation, coercion and learning (Simmons et al. 2006). However, this vast body of research does not provide much leverage in understanding domestic variations in the adoption of approaches that arise from international norms and expectations.

At the same time and in a partially overlapping body of research, constructivist international relations scholars have built a nuanced picture of the spread of certain norms internationally.<sup>14</sup> However, this research often dwells on international actors and on processes of external influence, while overlooking or under-theorizing the role and motivations of the target state. This bias makes sense, given that international relations scholars' ontological focus is on the international and *not* the domestic sphere. As a result, however, we know much less about how and why states react to pressures arising from international norms and expectations. An example is the volume by Risse et al. (1999), which addresses the question: "what accounts for the variation in the degree to which human rights norms are implemented?" (1). In answering this

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<sup>12</sup> Risse et al. 1999; Price 1998; Keck and Sikkink 1998.

<sup>13</sup> Risse et al. 1999; Checkel 2005; Flockhart 2006; Greenhill 2010.

<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., Keck and Sikkink 1998; Checkel 1997, 1999 and 2001; Risse-Kappen 1994 and 1995.

question, Risse et al. develop the ‘spiral model’ theory, which focuses on the role of transnational activists and ‘domestic opposition’ in accounting for variations in states’ internalization of human rights norms. Yet, while the state and state leaders are mentioned in both the theoretical and empirical case chapters, this work tells us little about the role and agency of state actors in these processes.

Building on this initial body of research on international norms, a second generation of constructivist scholars has taken the primacy of the local or the domestic as a starting point. These scholars have begun to explore in greater detail the ways in which international norms are filtered, translated and localized within domestic and regional contexts. While this work offers an important corrective to the broader literature mentioned above, by focusing on how international ideas are processed within the domestic sphere, many of these scholars continue to skip around, above, or below the state itself. In an influential contribution, Cortell and Davis (2000) advance a set of tools for analyzing the impact of international norms based on the norm’s ‘domestic salience,’ and identify a set of mechanisms and conditions that might contribute to a norm gaining salience within a given domestic context. However, their approach does not offer much of an answer as to how and how effectively a norm is resisted if it lacks domestic salience for one reason or another. In contrast, Freyburg and Richter (2010) argue that greater attention needs to be paid to the *obstacles* to domestic reform posed by ideational factors in the domestic sphere. They posit that *national identity* acts as a filter that shapes conceptions of what is appropriate and acceptable, and that determines how a state reacts to external demands for reform. Still, the authors do not specify the mechanisms or agents through which national identity functions as a prior causal and constitutive filter.

Most promisingly, Acharya (2004) advances a theory of *norm localization*, which explains when, why and how an international norm is localized within a regional or domestic context. In particular, this theory stresses two important points: first, that local actors (‘proponents’ or ‘entrepreneurs’) are important agents in the process of norm diffusion (245, 249); and second, that local factors can enhance or diminish the likelihood and ease of diffusion of an international norm into that local context. Yet, while Acharya indicates that *resistance* is one of three possible local responses to international norms, his theory only obliquely accounts for resistance as an outcome (253-254). Finally, Pedersen (2006) theorizes about how internationally diffused ideas are *translated* at the local level, resulting in different types of policies in different countries. However, this approach focuses on the particularities of domestic institutions that are established to implement an internationally-diffused policy idea, but does not address how domestic institutions and actors resist competing or new ideas. Thus, three factors that remain largely overlooked in these approaches are the domestic obstacles to diffusion, factors that reinforce national heterogeneity over international convergence, and the agency of the state.

Finally, in a slightly different vein, some international relations scholars have noted that a state’s ‘vulnerability’ partially determines how likely its policies or practices are to change in response to international normative pressures.<sup>15</sup> More recently, Mitzen (2006) has argued that states’ actions in the international sphere can be motivated by a desire to maintain their identities in the

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<sup>15</sup> Gurowitz 1999 and 2006; Klotz 1995; Risse et al. 1999: 24, 245; Keck and Sikkink 1998: 28-9, 118-9, 207-8.

face of threats or challenges.<sup>16</sup> In such work, however, a state's vulnerability is usually understood as being in relation to its international identity and/or policies, while the internal or domestic dimensions of a state's vulnerability are under-explored.

Building on the work outlined above, this project identifies whether, how and through which mechanisms international norms influence changes and continuities in states' narratives; the considerations that shape states' resistance to international pressures related to these ideas; and the strategies used by state actors to resist such pressures.

### *Literature on memory politics and transitional justice*

The second set of literatures that are relevant is the interdisciplinary scholarship on memory studies and transitional justice. Within this broad scholarship, rich bodies of research have coalesced around different 'sites' of memory and types of remembering, or investigated changes in particular countries' national consciousnesses over time.<sup>17</sup> For instance, scholars of Japanese politics and history have analyzed societal attitudes toward history issues, the role of history issues in bilateral or trilateral relations, particular 'sites' at which controversies over history are played out, and the historiography of particular events, such as the Nanjing Massacre. Official narratives, however, are rarely studied as a dependent variable. As a consequence, we lack a strong understanding of the mechanisms that shape changes and continuities therein.<sup>18</sup> Thus this body of work does not offer a clear answer to the question I ask. In part, this is due to the fact that research in this area is often in disciplines other than political science, and scholars ask different questions. In addition, much of the valuable work in this literature focuses in depth on particular cases, whereas some of the transitional justice literature in political science engages with normative questions of justice and ethics. Thus this wide-ranging literature, which spans disciplines in both the social sciences and the humanities, has contributed more to our understanding of *collective* memory than *official* memory. Still, this body of scholarship offers theoretical insights and invaluable empirical evidence, on which I draw in my case studies.

In particular, scholars have identified various factors that can lead to changes in states' and societal narratives of dark pasts. Let me briefly sketch the main insights that relate to my focus. First, the literature on transitional justice is based on the premise that regime change and elite transitions often lead states to look into and reevaluate past wrongs, and explicitly acknowledges that each country's process of transition involves different policies, along with trade-offs between seeking justice for past victims and societies and uncovering details about past crimes of state (e.g., Elster 2004; Barahona de Brito et al. 2001a). Another finding among scholars of transitional justice and memory studies, especially those who study Germany's ongoing process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past), is that generational change can lead to shifts in states' and/or societies' understandings of past wrongs (Lebow et al. 2006;

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<sup>16</sup> Moreover, this argument has recently been extended to official denials and forgiveness-seeking by Zarakol (2010) and Löwenheim (2009), respectively.

<sup>17</sup> For studies that focus on the Turkish narrative of the Armenian Genocide, see: Göçek 2006; Suny et al. 2011; Gunter 2011; Ulgen 2010; Bayraktar 2010; Akçam 2006; Bloxham 2005; Hovannisian 1999a. Regarding the Holocaust, see: Art 2006; Kansteiner 2006; Olick 2005; Stone 2004 and 2003; Fox 2001; Herf 1997; Maier 1988; Moeller 2003.

<sup>18</sup> An exception is a group of recent studies of official apologies (Nobles 2008; Yamazaki 2006), but these are a subset of official narratives and thus narrower than my focus.

Aguilar 2008).<sup>19</sup> A third argument, which might also be predicted by neorealists, is that international change, such as the end of the Cold War, the emergence of new states, or changes in the relative balance of power between key states, can lead to changes in states' narratives (Bloxham 2005). More recently, the international relations scholar Jennifer Lind argued that foreign pressure for greater contrition, and official apologies for past human rights abuses, are both likely to lead to a nationalist backlash (Lind 2008: 7, 195).<sup>20</sup> Finally, scholars have argued that domestic public debate can lead to changes in public and official understandings of historical wrongs (Art 2006). Yet while each of these arguments is true in some cases at some times, they do not adequately explain variations in states' narratives.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, there is little work that systemically and comparatively probes the sources of change and continuity in states' narratives and considers both domestic and international factors.

Recently, international relations scholars have started to study collective memories in a variety of contexts, most often as an independent variable that shapes states' foreign policies and bilateral relations between states.<sup>22</sup> Yet, as Langenbacher and Shain (2010: 2, 25) and Lind (2008: 197-8) note,<sup>23</sup> conceptual and theoretical work is still needed in this area. My project addresses these gaps, conceptualizing the elements and indicators of an official narrative and theorizing the sources and processes through which states' narratives are shaped over time.

In addition, the institutional and process-oriented approach of this dissertation is informed by several approaches to the study of memory. My project takes state institutions and domestic actors as its primary ontological foci, and strives to identify the roles of those domestic actors who are most involved in shaping, contesting and defending official narratives over time. These aspects of my project are similar to the sociologist Michael Schudson's (1992) work on the place of Watergate in American memory. He focuses on 'carriers' or 'agents' of Watergate memory (*Ibid.*: 69, 87), and on the institutions and actors that have played the most prominent roles in crafting and perpetuating different versions of the memory of Watergate in American society and politics. Likewise, my focus on the processes by which official narratives are produced over time is somewhat similar to the sociologist Jeffrey Olick's process-relational approach (2007). In

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<sup>19</sup> For example, Aguilar argues that "the arrival of a new generation of political leaders, more imbued with the principles of universal justice, devoid of the fears of their predecessors and, unlike them, confronted with a situation of democratic stability, largely accounts for the transformations that have taken place in the Spanish case. However, ... this generational variable has been a necessary, yet insufficient, condition for explaining the advances that have been achieved in the field of transitional justice" (2008: 418).

<sup>20</sup> Aside from this finding, the central focus of Lind's work is somewhat different from mine, since her independent variable is roughly equivalent to my project's dependent variable. Specifically, Lind's project "examines whether a country's 'remembrance' ... affects how former adversaries view its intentions" (2008: 4), whereas I have sought to explain the factors that shape a country's 'remembrance' (to use her term).

<sup>21</sup> A large degree of the seeming contradictions in different scholars' conclusions can be explained by the facts that many studies focus on either the domestic sphere or the international sphere, and many of these insights are derived from projects that answer a question that is related to, but somewhat different from mine.

<sup>22</sup> Key recent work in this vein includes: Lind 2008; He 2009; Langenbacher and Shain 2010; Müller 2002; and Lebow et al. 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Lind calls for future research to investigate the factors that shape states' historical narratives. In the conclusion to her study of the impact of a state's level of contrition for a past crime on the former victim state's threat perception, she writes: "The circumstances that shape countries' historical narratives is a second important area for research. ... Why do some states pursue contrition at all? The above interpretations noted the influence of a country's strategic environment: although this clearly plays a role, factors related to international norms, domestic politics, and individuals leadership probably do as well" (2008: 197).

conceptualizing memory as a process, Olick writes (2007: 109) that: “Collective memory is ... part of the self-definition process that is at the very heart of politics ... . Neither a tool for pursuing interests nor the ‘foundation’ of identity, remembering is a central medium in which identity and interest are negotiated and contested.” Art similarly emphasizes (2006: 202) that “coming to terms with the past is not a one-shot deal,” and is rather an iterative, ongoing process, without a clear telos or trajectory. In addition, the historian Holger Herwig’s (1987) fascinating discussion of the strategies used by German officials to create and perpetuate an official narrative about Germany’s role in starting World War I (WWI) offers a model for my own analysis of the processes through which official narratives can be defended and strengthened. And finally, like the work of Nobles (2008) on official apologies, Elster (2004) on transitional justice, and Golob (2003) on transcending policy frontiers, all of which discuss the *motivations* of state actors, my project discusses the ideational and ideological motivations that underlie state actors’ involvement in shaping official narratives of dark pasts.

### *Scholarship on the history and historiography of the Armenian Genocide*

A third literature to which my work relates is the body of scholarship that lies between the fields of Turkish studies and genocide studies. The issue of the Armenian Genocide, or the ‘Armenian question’ (*Ermeni sorunu*),<sup>24</sup> has largely been overlooked in the field of Turkish studies. In the past five to ten years, however, scholars have begun to study the historiography of the genocide in Ottoman and Turkish politics and society. This body of work includes: analyses of early debates and discourse about the Armenian massacres in Ottoman society (Aktar 2007), studies of the issue in Kemalist discourse and policies,<sup>25</sup> analyses of how the issue has been framed in the Turkish media (Bayraktar 2010) and in textbooks (Ulgen 2010; Dixon 2010a), work that traces trends and issues in Armenian and Turkish scholarship on the genocide,<sup>26</sup> and work that considers the role of historical memories in aspects of Turkish politics.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, my project draws on an increasingly sophisticated body of historical scholarship on the Armenian Genocide<sup>28</sup> and on the broader context of genocide and ethnic cleansing at the time.<sup>29</sup>

My work contributes to this growing discussion. In particular, it is one of only a handful of projects to focus on the *official Turkish* narrative of the genocide, and the only one to *systematically* trace changes and continuities in this narrative over the course of the past several decades. In this vein, this project contributes original research that will be useful as a basis for future in-depth and comparative research. Moreover, the comparison of the Turkish and Japanese

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<sup>24</sup> This is the Turkish phrase for the political issue of the Armenian Genocide. The Turkish is ‘*Ermeni sorunu*’ or ‘*Ermeni meselesi*’, both of which mean ‘the Armenian question/problem/issue.’ These euphemisms date from approximately the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and were initially used to refer to the status of the Armenian minority in the Ottoman Empire, and Western states’ actions on behalf of or in connection with this Christian minority group. Since 1915, these phrases have come to focus more specifically on the controversy over the Armenian Genocide, which in official Turkish historiography includes references to the status of Armenians within the Ottoman Empire. More recently, other phrases have also been used, such as ‘*sözde Ermeni iddiaları/soykırımı*’ (‘the so-called Armenian claims/genocide’) and ‘*1915 olayları*’ (‘the 1915 events’).

<sup>25</sup> Adak 2007; Ulgen 2010; Öktem 2008; Dixon 2010b; Göl 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Suny et al. 2011; Göçek 2006; Gunter 2011; Lewy 2005.

<sup>27</sup> Zarakol 2010; Walker 2010; Açar and Rüma 2007; Özyürek 2007.

<sup>28</sup> E.g., Akçam 1992, 2004, 2006 and 2008; Kévorkian 2011; Hovannisian 2007a; Bloxham 2003b and 2005; Kaiser 2006; Üngör 2011c; Üngör and Polatel 2011.

<sup>29</sup> Gaunt 2006; Gingeras 2009; Dündar 2010; Schaller and Zimmerer 2008; Bjørnlund 2008.

cases yields valuable comparative insights, which should be particularly useful for scholars and policymakers.

### ***Research design and methodology***

This dissertation develops a middle-range theory that can, in future research, be extended to and tested in other cases of official narratives of dark pasts. I use comparative-historical analysis and process tracing to compare and analyze changes within and across two cases over a period of sixty years, and to develop a set of arguments about the sources of continuity and change in official narratives. These methods allow me to trace the mechanisms that underlie these dynamics, and to identify the factors that shape the timing and content of changes in official narratives. As Levy (2008: 6) notes, “the methodology of *process tracing*..., which involves an intensive analysis of the development of a sequence of events over time, is particularly well-suited to the task of uncovering intervening causal mechanisms and exploring reciprocal causation and endogeneity effects.” In concrete terms, I identify points of change in each official narrative, the content and nature of particular changes, and the factors – domestic and international, and material and normative – that put pressure on (or alternatively, support) each official narrative. I also trace the processes through which change occurs, and analyze the mechanisms that reinforce continuities in these official narratives.

### ***Conceptualization and indicators of an ‘official narrative’***

I define an ‘official narrative’ as the state’s characterization of an event, including its nature and scope, *and* the state’s characterization of its own involvement in and responsibility for the event. *Official* characterizations are those made by government officials and institutions whose actions and statements are widely considered to represent the government’s position. I also include organizational and other strategies to reproduce and defend the official narrative.

To trace the content of and changes in these official narratives, I focus on five indicators:

- 1) Statements and actions by state leaders and spokespeople;
- 2) Accounts and coverage in school textbooks;
- 3) Accounts in official publications;
- 4) Legislative resolutions and bills; and
- 5) Government-sponsored commemorations, museums and memorials.<sup>30</sup>

These indicators are intended to capture the voices and actions of those who ‘speak’ for or as the state, and exclude those actors and institutions that may be governmental actors, but whose statements and actions do not reflect the intentional, official policy of the state on this issue. In Turkey, actors that are counted as ‘official’ are: the President, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Education, the Minister of Justice, the Secretary General of the National Security Council, the Parliament, and ambassadors. In Japan, ‘official’ actors are: the Emperor, the Prime Minister, the Chief Cabinet Secretary, the Cabinet as a whole,

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<sup>30</sup> I also consider the following other indicators, but not as systematically as the above five: 1) textbook curricula and guidelines; 2) reparations and other payments to victim states, groups and/or individual victims; 3) the state’s treatment of dissensions from the official narrative; and 4) laws that prevent or limit discussion of the issue.

the Diet as a whole, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Justice, and ambassadors. Moreover, given that there are multiple state actors and institutions whose voices are considered ‘official,’ I am attentive to fissures and gaps *among* official actors and across the different indicators that I trace.

### *Epistemological assumptions*

Epistemologically, this project follows a pragmatic approach. While I do not believe that it is possible to construct a single, comprehensive and completely ‘true’ narrative of a historical event, I do believe that it is possible to construct a generally agreed-upon narrative of a historical event. In other words, I am neither a positivist nor a relativist, but somewhere in between. As such, for each of the events studied in this project, I draw on historians’ research to sketch a generally-accepted narrative of the event, while acknowledging facts that are uncertain and/or contested among a majority of the historians who study each event.

While the official narratives analyzed in this project highlight how there can be wide discrepancies between widely available facts and information about a given event and the way in which certain actors narrate that event, this project also demonstrates that historical narratives *are* affected by available information and scholarship concerning the underlying events. I mention this to emphasize the fact that ‘truth’ and ‘facts’ *do* matter in the construction and ongoing production of historical narratives, but not in a direct manner. Instead, states’ narratives of historical events are *political* narratives, and as such reflect *political* dynamics and influences as well as *historical* information and analysis.

Thus, I trace how these narratives change in relation to themselves and also in relation to basic understandings of the nature of the events. Moreover, my analysis of the content of these narratives pays particular attention to interpretations and expressions of the official responsibility for these events.<sup>31</sup>

### *Measuring official narratives*

In order to study and compare these official narratives, I have developed a conceptual continuum with which to measure official narratives and change therein. My conceptualization builds on existing scholarship on denial and apology, in particular the sociologist Stanley Cohen’s (2001) work on denial and on the political scientist Barry O’Neill’s (1999) work on apology, to construct a rubric that captures the most important steps and shifts in states’ narratives in a form that is both usable and sufficiently nuanced. The continuum is shown in Figure 1.1 (below). This conceptualization is an important contribution to the study of historical memories, which other researchers can use to analyze and compare narratives in diverse contexts, thereby allowing

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<sup>31</sup> In this, my approach is similar to that of Yamazaki, who writes in her study of Japanese apologies: “In the study, I do not focus on the actual nature of the alleged crimes, on their validity, or on whether the crimes deserve our condemnation. The basic facts concerning allegations of Japanese behavior are not generally contested; it is the interpretation of these facts and the official acknowledgement of guilt that has been disputed and is a matter of political debate. In any case, for our purposes, we accept the allegations as valid, as requiring, justifying or at least providing the basis for apology” (2006: 32).

for the discovery and accumulation of more generalizable knowledge about the politics of memory and historical narratives.



**Figure 1.1. Continuum for conceptualizing and measuring change in official narratives**

There are eight steps on the continuum, starting (from the bottom) with *Deny / silence*. The subsequent steps are: *Mythmake / relativize*, *Acknowledge*, *Acknowledge harm & express regret*, *Admit responsibility*, *Apologize*, and *Offer compensation*. Finally, at the opposite end (top) of the continuum is *Commemorate*. Each step on the continuum captures a possible element of a state's official narrative, and each step up on the continuum is meant to capture movement in the direction of greater and fuller acknowledgement of the event and greater acceptance of responsibility for the event.<sup>32</sup>

The first five steps on the continuum are about how the event is written in history, i.e., about the state's characterization of the event itself, including its own involvement in the event. The last three steps on the continuum are about actions taken by the state to make reparations for the event. In simple terms, one might characterize the first five steps as 'descriptive,' and the subsequent three steps as 'reparative.' Furthermore, given that each indicator has a particular range of communicative purposes and audiences, some of the indicators tend to correlate with one or the other part of the continuum. For example, official statements are more likely to correlate with the reparative steps, while textbooks typically correlate with the descriptive steps and *not* with the reparative steps.

<sup>32</sup> Following O'Neill (1999: 186), I assume that these steps roughly follow a rough Guttman scale, such that if a state apologizes, then I would assume that the state has done or would agree to the prior points on the continuum, such as acknowledging the event.



The first step on the continuum is *to deny or silence the event*. Cohen defines *denial* as claiming “that something did not happen, does not exist, is not true or is not known about” (2001: 3).<sup>33</sup> My categorization follows one of the three types of denial that Cohen outlines: ‘literal denial,’ which he defines as “the type of denial that fits the dictionary definition: the assertion that something did not happen or is not true. In *literal* ... denial, the fact or knowledge of the fact is denied” (Cohen 2001: 7).<sup>34</sup> This might include claiming that the event did not occur, or refusing to acknowledge the charge, which might be done by claiming that the government did not have a role in or knowledge of the event.<sup>35</sup>

*Silencing* can be a passive or an active policy. As a passive policy, silencing would involve saying nothing about the event and omitting it from official histories. As an active policy, silencing could include suppression of discussion of the issue within the domestic sphere through laws that ban or limit discussion of the issue, and through the accompanying punishment of dissenters (again, domestically), and/or suppression of references to the event internationally.

The second step on the continuum is *to mythmake or relativize the event*. This is akin to what Cohen terms interpretive denial, which he defines as when “the raw facts ... are given a different meaning from what seems apparent to others. ... Officials do not claim that ‘nothing happened’, but what happened is not what you think it is, not what it looks like, not what you call it. ... By changing words, by euphemism, by technical jargon, the observer disputes the cognitive meaning given to an event and re-allocates it to another class of event” (2001: 7-8). Mythmaking or relativizing the events might include:

- 1) Claiming that the event in question was not mass killing or genocide, but was instead a normatively less deplorable action, such as an act of war, random violence, etc.;
- 2) Acknowledging that people died, but arguing that their deaths resulted from other factors (i.e., that they were not murdered);
- 3) Questioning and downplaying the number of people killed;
- 4) Arguing that no evidence (or insufficient evidence) exists to convincingly substantiate the changes, and/or that the individuals or groups making the claim are biased and/or lying;
- 5) Arguing that a different government or group is responsible for the event;
- 6) Accusing the victim group of initiating the violence, and/or claiming that the victims were actually the perpetrators.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> This definition closely reflects the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) definition of denial, which is “the asserting (of anything) to be untrue or untenable; [the] contradiction of a statement or allegation as untrue or invalid; also, the denying of the existence or reality of a thing.” See: OED, “Denial,” available at: [http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50060824?single=1&query\\_type=word&queryword=denial&first=1&max\\_to\\_show=10](http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50060824?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=denial&first=1&max_to_show=10), accessed on 7 June 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Cohen writes that literal denial “in the public realm of atrocities” could include the following assertions: “nothing happened here, we don’t believe you, we didn’t notice anything, they didn’t tell us anything, it couldn’t have happened without us knowing (or it could have happened without us knowing). These assertions refuse to acknowledge the facts” (2001: 7).

<sup>35</sup> The discussion in this section draws, in part, from Smith (1991: 70) and Charny (1991: 13-4).

<sup>36</sup> The discussion above draws on Charny (1991: 13-5) and Charny 2003.

The third step is *to acknowledge the event*,<sup>37</sup> which means to admit that the event occurred and to agree with basic facts about the event, such as that a number of people were killed. For the purposes of this project, acknowledging the event involves passing a relatively low bar of factual recognition, and can continue to coexist with mythmaking and/or relativizing of the event.

The fourth step on the continuum is *to acknowledge harm and express regret for the event*. This step involves recognizing the harm to and suffering by the victim group, and making statements (in writing, speech or action) that express regret for the harm that was suffered by the victim group. ‘Regret’ is an expression indicating the wish that something had not happened or that the outcome had been different. A key difference between this step and the prior one is that this step involves recognizing that what happened to the victims of the event was morally wrong.<sup>38</sup>

The fifth step on the continuum is *to admit responsibility for the event*. This means that the state acknowledges that the event was organized or perpetrated by agents or institutions of the state.

The sixth step on the continuum is *to apologize for the event*. In defining apology, I borrow the definition from O’Neill’s book *Honor, Symbols, and War*. In defining an apology (by X to Y for action A), he posits that “a full apology ... needs an acknowledgement of the harm done to Y, the moral wrong involved in the action, and X’s responsibility for it” (1999: 185).<sup>39</sup> <sup>40</sup> I categorize a state as having apologized if it conveys all three of these elements, and if it uses a variant of the words ‘sorry’ or ‘apology’ in the statement. This requirement draws on O’Neill’s conceptualization of international apologies, which only considers as apologies those statements in which “actors themselves ... make an explicit reference to apologizing or ... use some related term” (1999: 178).

The seventh step on the continuum is *to offer compensation for the event*. This could involve offering compensation to victims of the event, to the families of victims of the event, to groups that represent and help victims of the event and/or the identity group that suffered in the event, and/or to one or more states in which the victims and/or families and descendants of the victims reside. The compensation needs to be explicitly identified as compensation for the event and/or for suffering in and harm from the event.

An important note is that, while I think it is plausible that a state could apologize after offering compensation, it seems much more likely that a state would be willing to apologize *before* it

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<sup>37</sup> This and the next step on the continuum are drawn in part from O’Neill’s Guttman “partial order on the elements of an apology” (1999: 187).

<sup>38</sup> This point draws on a distinction O’Neill makes (1999: 185-6). Up to and including this step, one element of the official narrative could be an argument that the state is not legally responsible for the event, because the existing regime is a different one from the one at the time of the event. Smith writes that this is when the state “argue[s] that there is not continuity in fact, law, or moral responsibility between the” current regime and the perpetrating regime (1991: 69).

<sup>39</sup> O’Neill’s formal definition of an apology (by X to Y for action A) is “a communicative act from X to Y meaning that X did A, that A caused Y harm or risk and on that account that it was wrong, and that X feels remorse for it” (1999: 183-4).

<sup>40</sup> Yamazaki defines a ‘true apology’ as: “the acceptance of responsibility for wrongdoing and expression of regret” (2006: 4); and Nobles writes that “an apology is an acknowledgement and moral evaluation of wrongdoing” (2008: 28). These definitions are slightly different from O’Neill’s, which I have chosen to follow because his definition includes explicit identification of the relevant parties in the apology (and in the event.)

would be willing to offer compensation. In other words, while the order of the last three steps on the continuum could plausibly be different from their ordering on my continuum, I think my continuum captures the most likely ordering of these three acts.<sup>41</sup>

The final step on the continuum is *to commemorate the event*, which involves actions and/or statements that recall, document and/or honor the event and/or its victims in ways that acknowledge the event and the government's responsibility for the harm suffered. This might include: holding ceremonies to remember the event on anniversary dates, documenting the event in government-owned or -funded museums, documenting the event in government archives and government-sponsored or -supported research centers, honoring individuals or groups for actions related to the event, and constructing monuments to remember the event and/or its victims.

### *Measuring change and continuity*

At any given point in time, an official narrative typically comprises one or more of the elements on the continuum. I measure *change* as the addition or subtraction of one or more elements from an official narrative, and *continuity* is defined as the lack of change over a period of time. A *phase* is a period of time during which there is no change in the elements of the official narrative.<sup>42</sup> When one or more element is added or taken away from the official narrative, then a change has occurred and the official narrative has entered a new *phase*. In this way, I have identified several phases and points of change in each official narrative (see Figures 1.2 and 1.3, below).

Using this approach to measurement, one can also talk about the magnitude and direction of particular changes. The *magnitude* of change refers to the number of elements that are added to or subtracted from the official narrative in moving from one phase to another. And the *direction* of change refers to whether the official narrative moves in the direction of silencing, or in the direction of apology, commemoration and compensation. However, change in one direction does not preclude future change in the opposite direction. Correspondingly, this continuum allows for the measurement of change in either direction, and does not assume progressive change. In addition, there is no telos to official narratives, meaning that there is no final place at which a 'good' or 'appropriate' official narrative has been achieved and an issue can finally be consigned to history.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Rohne et al. write that "a major form of reparation is of a monetary nature since it can compensate at least material losses suffered by the victimization and the process of rehabilitation" (2008: 26). Interestingly, in contrast to the ordering on my continuum, Rohne et al. theorize that "redress (e.g. material reparation)" is the *first step* in a four-step process of "relational restoration," of which the *last step* is "reconciliation (e.g. mutual forgiveness)" (2008: 28). This model contrasts with my continuum, which places "material reparation" – which is called "compensation" on my continuum – as a later step in the trajectory of a state's narrative.

<sup>42</sup> Some scholars working within the social movements literature use the phrase 'episodes of contention,' which McAdam et al. (2001: 24) define as "continuous streams of contention including collective claims making that bears on other parties' interests." The phases that I identify in my research are different from these 'episodes of contention' for a couple of reasons. First, the phases that I identify do not correspond with episodes that would be easily identifiable to either participants within or observers of these processes; instead, they are phases that I have identified through my analysis of the content of the official narrative. Second, these phases are comprised of both contentious and non-contentious politics.

<sup>43</sup> Barahona de Brito et al. observe that "even after it has ceased to become a part of the active political agenda, the past can continue to be a source of conflict in the judicial arena and of latent or overt deep-seated social animosities.

## *The cases*

This dissertation focuses on two official narratives, whose trajectories over the past sixty years have been characterized by strong continuities, and yet have also changed to varying degrees. The two cases are: Turkey's official narrative of the 1915-17 Armenian Genocide, and Japan's official narrative of the 1937-38 Nanjing Massacre and Second Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945). In this section, I briefly sketch the historical background of each case, explain the logic underlying their selection, and describe the research that I have conducted to trace and analyze each narrative's trajectory over the period of analysis.

I should note that both of these events – and many other traumatic historical events like them – are highly contested. By this I do not mean that the basic facts or nature of the events are in question. Rather, I mean that some details are unknown and others are widely debated, such as the number of people killed in each event. In line with the epistemological position described above, my objective is to trace how and why the official narratives *about* these events have changed over time, and to extrapolate more general trends from the details of these two cases.

### *The Armenian Genocide*

The Armenian Genocide took place in the Ottoman Empire, under the cover of World War I. In the course of the genocide, which lasted from 1915 to 1917, the vast majority of the Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire were killed or forcibly deported from their homes to inhospitable locations in the Syrian desert and elsewhere within Ottoman territory.<sup>44</sup> In this context, an estimated 800,000 to 1.5 million Armenians were killed or died,<sup>45</sup> Armenian properties were appropriated and redistributed by agents of the state,<sup>46</sup> and the Armenian community that had lived for centuries in Anatolia was destroyed. This deportation and concomitant massacres were ordered and organized by the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, CUP), which governed the Ottoman Empire at the time, and occurred within the context of the widespread ethnic cleansing and destruction of Christian minorities living within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>47</sup>

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In some of the countries examined here [i.e., in their book], political and civil society openly reflects upon and debates the meaning the past. In others, the past is a ghost avoided by political elites, and they become 'haunted lands.' In still others, there are 'irruptions of memory' and then silence ... Sometimes memory politics and the rehabilitation of victims may be delayed. ... However, the long public absence of memory politics does not mean that memories do not continue to shape social and political action in subtle ways" (2001b: 37).

<sup>44</sup> A large body of evidence has documented the genocidal nature of these events. For political and legal evaluations, see: Libaridian 1985; Whitaker 1985; International Center for Transitional Justice 2003; International Association of Genocide Scholars 2005. For historical scholarship, see: Akçam 1992, 2004, 2006, 2008; Hovannisian 1992, 1999b, 2003, 2007b; Dadrian 1995; Kaiser 2001; Bloxham 2003a, 2003b, 2005; Suny et al. 2011; Üngör 2011c; Üngör and Polatel 2011; Kévorkian 2011. For primary sources, see: Davis 1989; Sarafian 1993; Miller and Miller 1993; Morgenthau 2000 [1918]; Dadrian and Akçam 2008; Bardakçı 2008. For excellent overviews of the causes and dynamics of the genocide, see: Ulgen 2010: 154-259 (chapters 3 and 4); Mann 2005: 111-179.

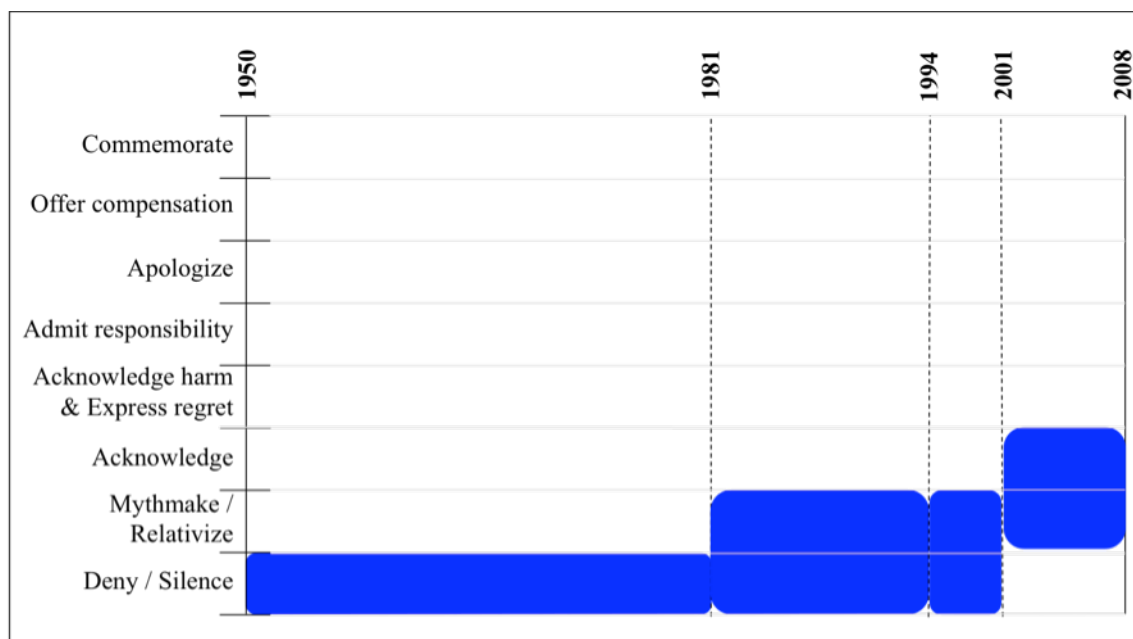
<sup>45</sup> The number of Armenians that died in the course of the genocide is difficult to accurately pinpoint and highly disputed. Estimates range from 1.5 million to a low of 200,000, with most scholars agreeing on at least 800,000 deaths. On this point, see: Bloxham 2005: 10; Dadrian 1992; Hovannisian 1999a: 217-219; Bloxham 2003a: 36-37; Naimark 2001: 40-41; Mann 2005: 140. For a lower estimate, see: McCarthy 1983.

<sup>46</sup> Kaiser 2006; Üngör and Polatel 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Üngör 2011c; Gaunt 2006; Üngör 2008; Schaller and Zimmerer 2008; Khosroeva 2007.

### *Turkey's narrative*

Over the past sixty years, which is the period of analysis in this project, Turkey's official narrative has steadfastly rejected claims that the events of 1915-17 were a genocide, and has advanced an alternative set of explanations to account for and justify the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Armenians. The official narrative that has developed over the past several decades has argued that claims of genocide were based on false propaganda by Armenians, that Armenians only constituted a small minority of the population in the Ottoman Empire, that Armenians rebelled against Ottoman rule and collaborated with the Ottoman Empire's enemies during WWI, and that Armenians committed massacres and atrocities against Ottoman Muslims, and more recently, against Turkish citizens. Yet while this baseline position has not changed, some of the content of the narrative *has* changed over time. From 1950 through the late-1970s, the issue was denied and silenced in the official narrative. From 1981, however, the official narrative shifted to include references to the events, but ones that largely involved mythmaking and relativizing the events. More recently, since 2001, the official narrative has ceased silencing and outright denying the events, acknowledges *basic* facts about the deportation and the deaths of Armenians, and more strongly relativizes the events. As part of these changes, new claims have also been added to the official Turkish narrative over the past few decades. Yet in spite of these shifts, this narrative's trajectory has been characterized more by continuity than by change. See Figure 1.2 (below) for a detailed breakdown of the phases that I have identified.



**Figure 1.2. Trajectory of the Turkish narrative, 1950-2008**

### *The Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War*

Japan invaded China in 1931 in the context of the expansion of its colonial empire. War was officially declared in 1937 and lasted until 1945. During this period, an estimated 20 million Chinese people died, tens of thousands of Chinese women were raped by Japanese soldiers,

approximately 40,000 Chinese people were forced to be slave laborers (Rose 2005: 5), and live medical and ‘scientific’ experiments were conducted on Chinese people.

The Nanjing Massacre was a discrete event within this war. It began in December 1937, when the Japanese army invaded Nanking, which was the capital of Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist forces. During and after the invasion, Japanese soldiers massacred tens of thousands of civilians and prisoners of war – with some estimates of the number killed ranging over 100,000, and with the official Chinese figure at 300,000 – and raped thousands of women during and after capturing the city.

### *Japan’s narrative*

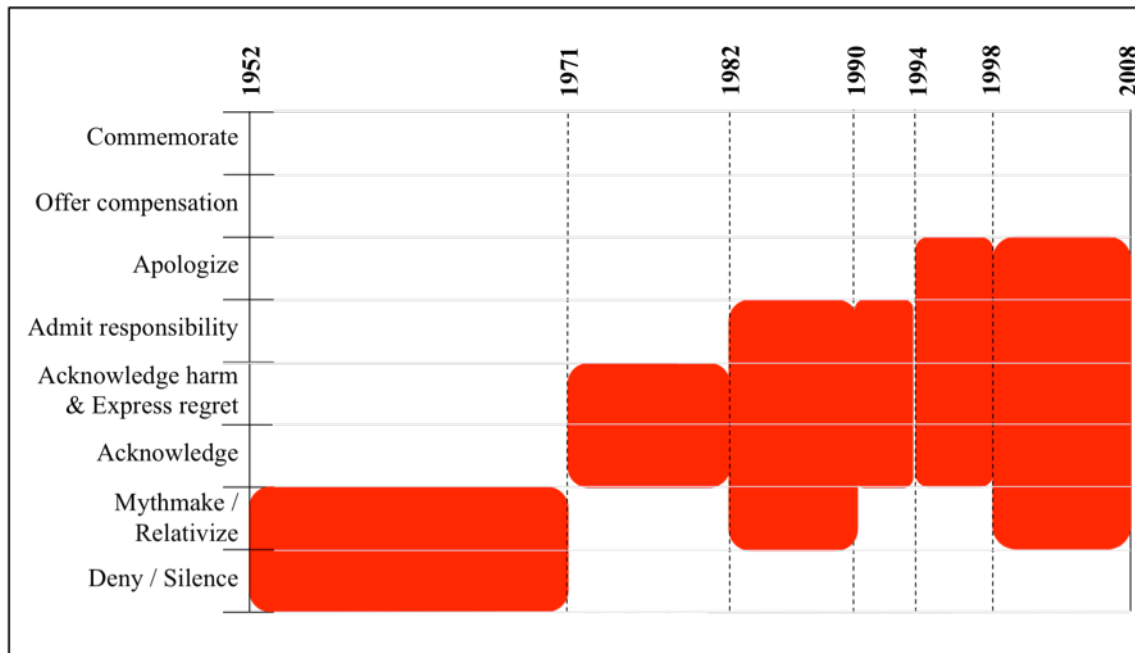
I study these two ‘events’ together, because they are analytically intertwined in official rhetoric, such that I cannot study the official narrative of the Nanjing Massacre independent of the broader narrative of the Second Sino-Japanese War.<sup>48</sup> To illustrate this: while Japan has frequently been criticized for representations of the Nanjing Massacre in its textbooks and while Japanese politicians have been called to task for statements denying the reality of the massacre, Japanese officials have most often responded to these criticisms with general statements about the nature of Japan’s conduct in WWII or the Second Sino-Japanese War.

Since 1952, Japan’s official narrative<sup>49</sup> of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War has moved through several phases, from general regret for Japan’s role in the war (1972-1993), to general apology (starting in 1994), to limited recognition of the Nanjing Massacre (since 1998). See Figure 1.3 (below) for a breakdown of the six phases that I have identified in the trajectory of Japan’s official narrative. Some of these shifts have been triggered by international pressure for greater contrition, especially from victim states like China and South Korea. Others, however, have emerged from the cumulative efforts of domestic actors, such as activists who have worked for greater coverage of wartime atrocities in Japanese textbooks, or conservative politicians whose statements denying the veracity of events like the Nanjing Massacre have, in some instances, led to official statements confirming the government’s recognition of and role in these events.

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<sup>48</sup> My reasoning is explained in greater detail in Chapter 6.

<sup>49</sup> For clarity and consistency across the two cases, I refer to the ‘Japanese narrative’ in the singular, rather than the plural ‘Japanese narratives.’



**Figure 1.3. Trajectory of the Japanese narrative, 1952-2008**

### *Logic of case selection*

I chose these two cases because they are similar in several important respects, but over the past several decades the two narratives have significantly diverged. Thus, these cases represent a *most similar systems design*, which means that the “cases ... are similar on a wide range of explanatory variables but different on the value of the dependent variable,” which is change in the official narrative (Levy 2008: 10).

Let me outline the similarities between the two cases. *First*, both are cases of mass killing. In this project, mass killing is defined as “the intentional killing of a massive number of noncombatants” by a government or by government agents.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, while one is a case of genocide and the other is not, both are highly symbolic events in the context of which the nature of the state’s past actions is contested. In addition, each is a single narrative within a complex of related but distinct narratives about events and atrocities that took place under the broader umbrella of the wars during which each event occurred. *Second*, both are cases that have been significantly contested over time, by groups within *and* outside the state. Both Turkey and Japan have been the subjects of intense scrutiny and pressure from a range of similar types of actors for the ways in which these events are officially remembered. Thus, these two official narratives have been affected by a similar set of independent variables, including pressures from victim states (e.g., China and Armenia<sup>51</sup>), third-party states (e.g., the US and EU member-states), transnational activists, domestic activists, and academics. *Third*, both are cases in which the victims are largely outside of the perpetrator state for the analyzed period. Given that the external

<sup>50</sup> This is adapted from Benjamin Valentino’s conceptualization of mass killing, which he defines (2004: 10) as “the intentional killing of a massive number of noncombatants.”

<sup>51</sup> In this project, states in which significant numbers of diaspora Armenians live are not considered ‘victim states,’ since in those states, Armenians constitute only a small percentage of the overall population.

political dynamic is much more limited for cases of indigenous genocides and other cases in which the majority of the victim group continues to reside within the boundaries of the perpetrator state, I have purposely selected cases in which the majority of the victims resides outside of the state. And *finally*, both states have been important actors within their respective regions, close allies of the US throughout the post-World War II period, and Western-oriented throughout the period of analysis.

In spite of these similarities, however, the two narratives have exhibited different degrees of change over the past several decades. Thus, while Japan's narrative has come to acknowledge and describe the events and to include statements of recognition, regret and apology, Turkey's narrative has been more intractable and the magnitude of change has been more muted.

### *Comparability*

Since these two cases differ in a few key respects, I want to briefly address potential doubts about their comparability for the purposes of this project. The three criticisms that one might make about the comparability of the two cases are that:

- 1) One is a case of genocide (the Armenian Genocide) and the other is a case of mass killing (the Nanjing Massacre), which are distinct legally and in terms of the degree of opprobrium that each carries;
- 2) In one case the victims were citizens of the state committing the mass killing (in the case of Ottoman Armenians killed in the Armenian Genocide), while in the other case the victims were non-citizens killed in another state in the context of the fighting of a war (in the case of Chinese civilians and prisoners-of-war killed in the Nanjing Massacre and in the broader war); and
- 3) One case has a powerful victim state (the People's Republic of China, as well as Taiwan), and the other has a weak victim state (the Republic of Armenia, and previously, the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic.)

There are several reasons why I believe that these differences do not undermine the validity of my argument. *First*, I compare *within-case changes* in both cases, which yields as much analytic insight as the cross-case comparison. The within-case comparison makes my findings more robust, because it enables me to control for many case-related factors (especially the nature of the event, the identity of the victims, and the size of the victim state) and therefore to more clearly isolate and identify the sources of changes over time and across phases in each case. *Second*, as I note in the next chapter, my arguments seem to explain dynamics in other cases, including West Germany's narrative of the Holocaust, Austria's narrative of the Holocaust, and France's narrative of the Vichy regime's collaboration with Nazis in the Holocaust. And *third*, many of my supporting arguments focus on the actors within the domestic sphere who shape and influence the shaping of official narratives, and the processes through which this occurs. The process-focused nature of these arguments makes them relatively unaffected by substantive differences between the two cases, since these arguments have not been developed by identifying patterns of influence that are evident in both cases.



### *Scope conditions and generalizability*

In terms of scope conditions, this research refers to past events of mass killing for which the state whose narrative is being studied bears responsibility, at least in part, for the planning and/or execution of the event. And while the two cases in this project fall into the category of mass killing, I think that my arguments can be extended to official narratives about mass atrocities and crimes against humanity, such as the wartime sex slave program (i.e., the so-called ‘comfort women’ program) of the Japanese military during WWII.

The two cases in this project are also ones in which the victims are located outside the perpetrator state for the period of analysis. I purposely chose two cases that fit this criterion, because I wanted to have a robust international dimension in order to assess the influence of international normative and material pressures on each state’s narrative. That said, I expect my arguments to apply to cases for which the victims largely reside *within* the perpetrator state for the period of analysis, although for such cases I would not expect international pressures to be as salient, since international actors would be less likely to have a direct interest in the case.

Finally, while some argue that both Turkey and Japan were on the losing side in the wars within which these events occurred (Walker 2010; Zarakol 2007), the arguments developed in this project do not apply only to defeated states. This is *not* a scope condition because, once a narrative has been established, the processes through which changes and continuities in that narrative are shaped do not depend in a distinct way on whether the perpetrator state won or lost in the broader war, or even on whether the event occurred within the context of a war. It is true that the processes and actors that shape the *initial formulation* of a state’s narrative are different for a defeated state than for a winning state, but I do not attempt to theorize the processes and actors that shape the initial formulation of a state’s narrative. My theory applies to *subsequent* processes of change and continuity in a state’s narrative.

### ***Research conducted***

I have drawn on a range of sources in constructing the trajectories of these official narratives over the past sixty years, in tracing the processes through which these narratives have been defended and contested, and in identifying the factors that have influenced changes and continuities in each narrative.

In order to more carefully trace the processes through which these narratives have been shaped and contested, I conducted approximately 50 semi-structured elite interviews in Turkey, 20 in Japan<sup>52</sup> and a handful in the United States. My interviews were with politicians, bureaucrats, activists, academics, and journalists who are involved in the politics of these issues and/or who study the dynamics that shape these politics. From them, I gained valuable insights into the factors that have been foremost in policymakers’ minds as they shaped these official narratives. My interviews also shed light on when and why societal actors have chosen to mobilize around these issues in each country, which helped me trace feedback processes. Finally, these interviews

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<sup>52</sup> I conducted some of the interviews in English, while others were conducted in Japanese with my research assistant. In these latter cases, my research assistant translated my questions and the interviewees’ answers during the interviews, and then typed up detailed notes after each interview.

helped me identify the mechanisms through which change occurs and through which continuity in the official narrative is reinforced.<sup>53</sup>

For the Turkish case, I analyzed the narrative in Turkish high school history textbooks, official and non-official Turkish publications, and official statements that were intended for domestic and international audiences. For the Japanese case, I tracked changes in textbook coverage, official statements, and official actions in the robust English-language secondary literature on the topic of ‘history issues’ and Japanese apologies. In addition, I analyzed hundreds of newspaper articles that capture statements and actions (related to both cases) by a broad range of domestic and international actors.

### *Summary of chapters*

The arguments outlined above are developed and substantiated over the course of the next seven chapters. **Chapter Two** fleshes out the arguments of the dissertation in detail, including the central argument and several supporting arguments. The chapter begins with an overview of the arguments developed in this project, and then addresses each argument in greater detail in separate sub-sections. Examples taken primarily from the two cases studied in this project, but also from other cases, are offered to illustrate many of the arguments. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of how my arguments would be falsified.

**Chapter Three**, which is the first of the three Turkish case chapters, outlines how the broad arguments developed in this dissertation apply to this case and puts in place the necessary analytical and historical details related to this case. I argue that the most important source of change in Turkey’s narrative has been international pressure, which has prompted Turkish officials to consider whether and how to change the official narrative at two key junctures. I emphasize, however, that such pressures have elicited multifaceted and multivalent responses in both the content of the official narrative and in the strategies developed by Turkish officials to defend it. Moreover, state actors and institutions have been actively and extensively involved in producing and defending the narrative, which I argue stems from the high material and ideological stakes of this issue for Turkish officials and government institutions. This chapter also includes an overview of the history and some aspects of the historiography of the Armenian Genocide, along with a discussion of the factors that shaped the narrative that was established after WWI. The chapter closes with brief sketches of the four phases that I have identified in the trajectory of Turkey’s narrative.

**Chapter Four** covers the first two phases of Turkey’s narrative (1950-1980, 1981 to the early 1990s), in which the narrative shifted from silencing and denying the event to an actively defended and articulated position that involved silencing and denying, but also mythmaking and relativizing the event. While this shift involved substantial continuity, particularly in the denial of Turkish intentionality in and responsibility for the deaths of Armenians, and in the silencing of the facts of the forced deportation and massacre of Armenians, it also entailed dramatic changes in the strategy used to defend the official narrative, and clear shifts in the arguments marshaled to rebut charges of genocide and massacre. This chapter demonstrates the extensive involvement

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<sup>53</sup> Note: Given the sensitive nature of these issues in both Turkey and Japan, I have decided not to give interviewees’ names in order to protect them.

of Turkish officials and agencies in producing and defending the official narrative, and draws attention to indications of the motivations and concerns behind their actions. Finally, this chapter reveals that the shift between the first and second phase was primarily prompted by international pressures, but that the content of the shift was determined by Turkish officials, with the help of retired diplomats, societal actors, and groups outside of Turkey whose help was actively cultivated by Turkish officials in the early to mid-1980s.

**Chapter Five** continues to map the trajectory of the Turkish narrative, covering Phases Three and Four (1994-2000 and 2001-2008.) Over this period, the content of the narrative shifted somewhat, no longer silencing and outright denying the events of the genocide, and coming to acknowledge basic facts of the events. At the same time, however, there were significant continuities in the narrative, both in its content and especially in the strategies used to support and disseminate it. This chapter highlights the continued and increasing involvement of Turkish officials in the defense and production of the narrative, especially in Phase Four, and notes how state actors have continued to involve societal actors in these efforts. Moreover, the changes identified in these phases illustrate how structural and international factors can be important triggers of change, while also showing the insufficiency of these factors in seeking to understand the timing and content of change. Furthermore, the developments in Phase Four draw attention to the potential for change to arise in response to domestic activism and challenges to the official narrative. And finally, these two phases demonstrate the role of feedback effects, particularly in reinforcing continuities in Turkey's narrative.

**Chapter Six** is the first of the three chapters analyzing the Japanese narrative of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War. This chapter situates my project in the context of existing research, gives an overview of the history and historiography of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War, and outlines how I develop my arguments in the context of this case. I argue that while international pressures, especially by China, have led Japanese officials to consider changing the official narrative, the source of the pressure and the demands made are not sufficient indicators of the content of changes that have been made in the official narrative. Like other scholars, I note how structural factors at both the domestic and international levels have strongly reinforced continuities in the narrative over time, but I emphasize that shifts in such factors have not produced consistent or predictable outcomes in the narrative. In addition, I highlight the high degree of domestic contestation, the lower material and ideational stakes for Japanese officials (compared to the Turkish case), and the complex feedback effects in this case, each of which has been an important factor in the trajectory of Japan's narrative. Finally, the latter half of the chapter analyzes the political factors that shaped the official narrative that was first established in the early 1950s, and outlines the six phases of the official narrative.

The discussion of the phases of the Japanese narrative continues in **Chapter Seven**, which focuses on the first three phases (1952-1971, 1971-1982, and 1982-1989). Over the course of these three phases, the narrative shifted from a broad silence and lack of acknowledgment of the events; to a general acknowledgement of the events and the harm suffered, and a vague expression of regret; to admissions of responsibility that were accompanied by undercurrents that relativized and/or mythologized the events. The main drivers of the continuities across these phases were domestic and international structural factors, attempts by Japanese leaders to move out of the shadow of the past, and conservative activism that pushed officials to maintain the

status quo. In addition, my analysis in this chapter demonstrates that the changes over this period arose from progressive domestic activism, the normalization of relations between Japan and China, and pressures from China and other former victim states.

**Chapter Eight** covers the last three phases in the Japanese narrative (1990-1994, 1994-1998, and 1999-2008). In this post-Cold War period, the official narrative shifted from mythmaking, acknowledging, acknowledging harm and expressing regret, coming to also include admitting responsibility and apologizing. The key factors that led to the apologies that were finally issued in Phase Five were external pressures from China and South Korea, changes in the international and domestic contexts that shaped this narrative, and the agency and goals of official actors in Japan. At the same time, political dynamics within Japan were, in many cases, the most important determinants of the content and magnitude of changes in the narrative in the three phases discussed in this chapter.

Finally, **Chapter Nine** reviews the dissertation's main arguments and implications, notes how these points contribute to broader academic debates, and highlights areas for future research.

– Chapter 2 –  
**Theorizing Continuity and Change in Official Narratives of Dark Pasts**

“Among other things, we need to know exactly who is invested in particular institutional arrangements, exactly how that investment is sustained over time, and perhaps how those who are not invested in the institutions are kept out.”

-- Kathleen Thelen (1999: 391)

***Introduction***

Changes in official narratives do not arise from a single cause, or even from a set of conjunctural causal factors.<sup>54</sup> Rather, official narratives are situated at the intersection of three political relationships, each of which exerts pressure on *and* is influenced by the official narrative: one is the relationship between official governmental actors (who represent the state and therefore directly ‘create’ the official narrative) and other political actors (especially national-level politicians), the second is the relationship between the state and its citizens, and the third is the relationship between the state and other states (especially the state or states in which the victims of the event reside).<sup>55</sup> Together these relationships create a complex, shifting set of influences and pressures on official narratives and their ongoing production.

This dissertation explores the relative influence of these different relationships on states’ narratives of dark pasts. In this chapter, I develop a set of arguments about the actors that support and contest official narratives of dark pasts, and the processes through which official narratives are contested and defended. My central argument is that *while international pressures can increase the likelihood of change in official narratives of dark pasts, domestic actors largely determine the content of such change*. In this argument, international pressures are *permissive* causes, while domestic actors and processes provide the necessary agents and mechanisms of change.<sup>56</sup>

Under the umbrella of this central argument, I develop four sets of supporting arguments that identify the domestic actors and processes through which changes and continuities in official narratives are shaped over time. In the remainder of this chapter, I develop each of these supporting arguments, drawing on evidence from the two cases in this project to elucidate each point.

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<sup>54</sup> In this sense, my approach is consistent with the findings of Lebow et al. (2006), who concluded that there is no systematic variable or set of causal variables that drive changes in historical narratives. In a later article, Lebow posits that “change of the desired kind in official narratives appears to hinge on the leverage of outside parties; the existence of groups within the target countries whose agendas are served by responding positively to external pressures; and the ability of these groups to convince the wider public, or at least key officials, that they must respond because of overriding political or national interests” (2008: 32). This picture of complex, conjunctural causality is consistent with my findings.

<sup>55</sup> One could also add a fourth relationship: that between the victim state or states and the citizens of the victim state(s). I find that this fourth relationship is captured in the actions of the states in which victims reside.

<sup>56</sup> See Goertz and Levy’s discussion of different types of causal explanations, and especially their discussion of arguments that employ a ‘window of opportunity’ metaphor (2007: 29-31).

## ***1. International and structural factors***

My first set of supporting arguments relates to the role of international and structural factors in shaping the content and direction of changes in states' narratives. In this dissertation, I argue that domestic actors and processes are the most important determinants of the *content* of changes in states' narratives. The story of changes and continuities in official narratives is not a purely domestic one, however. As one might expect, international actors and processes of influence also shape processes of change and continuity in states' narrative. In particular, I argue that international factors can challenge the legitimacy of an official narrative and/or change the cost-benefit calculus underlying it, which can lead official actors to consider whether and how to change an official narrative. In addition, I find that structural factors can play an important part in maintaining relations of power that support continuity in an official narrative.

### ***1a. International pressure for change***

I argue that *international pressure* can make change more likely to occur in official narratives (i.e., functioning as a permissive, but not sufficient, cause of change), but that one cannot glean a simple or clear pattern about either when change follows from international pressure or what the content of the change is, if and when it does occur.

What is 'international pressure'? International pressure takes three main forms: calls for the target state (i.e., Turkey or Japan) to apologize for and/or change its narrative of the event, demands for the target state to change the representation of the event in a particular domain (e.g., in textbooks or in a museum), and actions that express and/or bring attention to alternative narratives of the event (e.g., in references to the event or aspects of the event in international fora in ways that significantly diverge from the official narrative.) Moreover, international pressures can come from several different sources, or types of actors: *victim states* such as China, Taiwan and Armenia, *third-party states* that cannot claim to represent the voices of the victims or the perpetrators of the event, such as the United States and France (in the Turkish case); *international organizations*, such as the United Nations; *regional organizations*, such as the European Union or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); and *transnational actors*, such as the terrorist group the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) or the US-based Global Alliance for Preserving the History of WWII in Asia (in the Japanese case).

Specifically, I find that international pressures can make change more likely in several ways: by bringing new attention to and scrutiny of a state's narrative, by challenging the content and legitimacy of a state's narrative, and/or by making the status quo maintenance of the official narrative more costly for the state. Through these processes, international pressures can affect the background conditions within which the official narrative operates, thereby potentially opening a window of opportunity for change in the official narrative.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> This general framework is consistent with Kingdon's (1984) work on agenda-setting, in which 'windows of opportunity' are a key analytic feature. According to his model, policy change occurs when a window of opportunity opens, allowing participants both inside and outside the government to couple elements from the problem, policy and political streams. Likewise, David Art's (2006) analysis of changes in understandings of the Nazi past in Germany and Austria also uses similar language, writing about 'frames' that delineate a public's view on a topic and

Crucially, international pressures do not always or immediately open a window of opportunity. Instead, their influence on the official narrative is inconsistent and contingent. It is contingent both on the relative balance of power between the pressuring international actor and the perpetrator state, and on political factors within the domestic context, especially the direction of domestic contestation on the issue at that point in time.<sup>58</sup> And it is inconsistent, because in some cases a particular type of pressure by a particular source (e.g., a demand by China for Japan to change the representation of the event in a given domain, such as in textbooks or in commemorative actions) produces change, and at other times it does not. As a result, international pressure on states to change their narratives can produce complex, multifaceted results, which cannot be boiled down into simplistic assessments of international pressure as either ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ ‘effective’ or ‘ineffective’ in bringing about greater contrition. Instead, and in contrast to Jennifer Lind’s contention that international pressure for greater contrition can bring backlash from nationalists (2005: 3; 2008: 7, 195),<sup>59</sup> I find that international pressure for greater acknowledgement, apology and/or reparations can have a range of unpredictable effects, with steps toward greater recognition and apology sometimes occurring simultaneously with contrary movements.<sup>60</sup> To further complicate this picture, in some cases international pressures need to accumulate over time before officials consider changing the official narrative, while in other cases international pressures can act as catalysts, or proximate causes, of changes in an official narrative.<sup>61</sup>

All else being equal, however, I find that international pressures are more likely than domestic pressures to lead official actors to consider changing an official narrative (i.e., they are more likely to open the possibility of change in an official narrative). And yet, while international pressures can prompt official actors to change an official narrative, the content and magnitude of changes that arise are shaped to a greater extent by domestic actors and processes.<sup>62</sup>

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the possibility of ideational change that is ‘opened up’ by elite-led public debates. Thus, Art presents a punctuated model of ideational change in which public debates serve as critical junctures that reshape understandings of past atrocities.

<sup>58</sup> My argument here is similar to Golob’s observation about the effect of pressures that lead to critical junctures on changes in a state’s ‘policy frontier.’ She writes: “the critical juncture shifted the opportunity structure, but it cannot by itself account for the institutional or political dynamics that enabled new ideas to prevail” (2003: 387). Instead, similar to my emphasis on the role of domestic actors and processes in shaping the content of changes in states’ narratives, Golob’s “argument . . . highlights institutions and ideas within the state as the main causal mechanisms in foreign policy change” (2003: 394).

<sup>59</sup> This warning has been repeated by other scholars (Langenbacher 2010: 20; Nobles 2008: 31-2), which reflects the fact that this argument captures a clearly observable short-term result of international pressure. Importantly however, this is only one part of the processes that can arise as a result of and/or in response to international pressure on a state’s narrative of a dark past.

<sup>60</sup> A core question and point of debate among activists and observers in Turkey is whether international pressure for greater acknowledgement and apology from Turkey is counterproductive to that goal. I would argue that the reality does not conform to this black and white framing.

<sup>61</sup> Goertz and Levy write that “the catalyst is the proximate cause of the event while the window of opportunity is the prerequisite condition that gives the catalyst its causal efficacy” (2007: 32).

<sup>62</sup> Consistent with my argument, Barahona de Brito et al. argue that, in countries transitioning from authoritarian regimes to democracy, “whatever the strength of international pressures, the domestic context is still the key to understanding transitional justice processes” (2001b: 25). My argument is also similar to Colin Dueck’s argument about the determinants that shape US Presidents’ foreign policymaking on the issue of military intervention. He writes that “when facing the possibility of major military intervention, presidents usually begin by consulting what they perceive to be the national security interests of the United States. Subsequently however, they consider how best to pursue those conceptions of the national interest in light of domestic political incentives and constraints.

For example, in the Japanese case, international pressures – especially from victim states such as China, Taiwan and South Korea – have prompted Japanese officials to consider and make changes in Japan’s narrative of the Nanjing Massacre and of the broader Second Sino-Japanese War. In particular, since the early 1980s, complaints and pressure from victim states – especially China and South Korea – have increased attention on Japan’s official narratives of the Second World War. And yet, while some analysts have argued that external pressure is the primary source of change in Japan’s narratives of the war (e.g., Rose 2005: 90; Honda 1999: xxvi-xxvii), I find that the trajectory of Japan’s official narrative over the past few decades *cannot* be adequately explained by these external pressures. While such pressures do increase the *likelihood* of change in the official narrative, they cannot account for changes in the content of the official narrative over the past several decades. This is the case for two reasons: First, not all of the changes in Japan’s narrative of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War are coincident with or subsequent to moments of external pressure. Instead, some important changes in Japan’s official narrative have arisen as a result of pressures created by the efforts of domestic groups, with little to no involvement of international groups or bilateral pressures.<sup>63</sup> Second, even in instances when external pressure has pushed Japanese officials to consider changing an aspect of its narrative, the nature and intensity of external pressure cannot serve as a predictor of whether change occurs and the content and direction of change that does occur.

Similarly, Austria’s belated process of coming to terms with its extensive involvement in the Holocaust was prompted by the international controversy that arose in 1985, when it was revealed that the Austrian politician, diplomat and Presidential candidate Kurt Waldheim had lied about his potential involvement in and knowledge of Nazi atrocities committed in WWII. This controversy, which was known as the ‘Waldheim Affair,’ was led by international actors, especially the World Jewish Congress, the international (especially German) media, some politicians and groups in Israel, and the United States government (Beker 2010: 103-5). This controversy served to bring domestic (and international) attention to Austria’s official denial of involvement in the Holocaust. In the short term, this international pressure prompted a domestic backlash and a striking increase in anti-Semitic sentiment in Austria (Beker 2010: 104). Over time, however, this attention led to a widening domestic debate (Art 2006: 120-35) and changes in Austria’s official narrative.<sup>64</sup>

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These constraints frequently lead presidents to implement the precise conduct, framing, and timing of US intervention in a manner that may appear puzzling or anomalous from a neorealist perspective. In this sense, domestic politics ‘matters,’ not as the primary cause of intervention, but rather as a powerful influence on its exact form” (2009: 139).

<sup>63</sup> Consistent with this claim, Yoshida writes that: “descriptions of the Asia-Pacific War in the [Japanese] history textbooks have changed significantly since the war years to include more candid discussions of its dreadful facts. ... this development came as a result of a social movement from the bottom up that was driven by a number of history teachers and peace activists” (2007a: 55).

<sup>64</sup> In another example (from the same book chapter), Beker argues that “like the Austrians the Swiss began to confront their past as a result of the shock treatment that came with the astounding revelations presented over two years in the international press (1996-97) concerning Swiss financial activities during World War II” (2010: 108). He further notes that “the Swiss have now begun, under international pressure, to reexamine their wartime role as a neutral state. Their soul-searching has led to a different and a new narrative” (112).



### ***1b. Structural factors (international and domestic)***

I find that *structural factors* (at both the domestic and international levels) can help maintain the political arrangements that support and reinforce continuities in an official narrative.<sup>65</sup> In addition, I argue that changes in structural factors are insufficient in accounting for the timing, and especially, the content of changes in official narratives.<sup>66</sup>

At the international level, structural factors include: the overall balance of power among states in the international system, the alliances in which the perpetrator state participates, the nature of diplomatic relations between the victim and perpetrator state, and the relative balance of power between the perpetrator and victim state.<sup>67</sup> Thus, *changes in the international structure* that might influence changes in the official narrative include: the end of the Cold War, the emergence of new states, or changes in the relative balance of power between the victim and perpetrator states. Here I am not using ‘structural’ in the Waltzian/international relations sense of the term, but more generally, to refer to institutional and/or formal constraints on actors’ agency. At the domestic level (i.e., within the perpetrator state), structural factors include: the regime type, the formal distribution of power within the domestic political system, the party in power, the level of economic development, the nature of national identity, and socio-economic characteristics within the domestic sphere. Thus, *domestic structural changes* that might lead to changes in the official narrative include: regime change, changes in the party in power, shifts in national identity, and changes in socio-economic indicators.

Structural factors can help maintain continuities in an official narrative in several ways: by supporting and bolstering the power of political parties and official actors; by structurally disadvantaging the weak and/or vulnerable voices of victims (domestically and internationally); by institutionally entrenching power asymmetries between state officials (on one hand), and societal actors and out-of-power politicians and parties (on the other hand); and by ideationally and/or legally designating certain perspectives and issues as out-of-bounds or taboo.

In the Japanese case, some scholars have argued that *structural factors* – such as the structure of the international system and time – have set patterns of Japan’s memory politics and then prompted changes in those patterns at later dates. This argument captures only part of the picture, however. For example, when looking at *domestic structural factors*, there have been shifts in official policies about the past when the majority party in power has changed in Japan, but there

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<sup>65</sup> These points are consistent with Bloxham’s (2005) work, which focuses on how great power politics significantly shaped the conditions that led to the Armenian Genocide, and also played a fundamental role in shaping the politics that have enabled Turkey to deny and relativize the events in the decades that followed.

<sup>66</sup> International structural factors can be particularly crucial in shaping the content of an official narrative when it is first formulated. While this project does not attempt to theorize the factors that shape the *initial* formulation of a state’s narrative, the case study chapters do identify the factors that led to the initial creation of each of the two narratives under scrutiny in this project. This point finds resonance in scholarship on transitions from democracy and authoritarian legacies. For example, Agüero writes that “the first institutionalized postauthoritarian political arrangement helps shape the institutions that differentially empower the civilians and the military for the ensuing period” (2004: 245).

<sup>67</sup> Göçek observes that “the size and shape of the silence is closely connected to the power location of the social group in question” (2011: 194). While she is referring to the power location of a social group *within* the context of domestic politics, this observation equally applies to the power location, or relative power, of a victim group in the international context.

have also been changes at other times. There have also been changes in the official narrative when new Prime Ministers take office in Japan, but not always. Moreover, *international structural factors* offer little insight into how, how much and in what direction the narrative changes, when change does arise.

Looking at a particular structural factor – the regime type – further illustrates the limits of structural factors in accounting for particularities of changes in official narratives. As is amply demonstrated in the literature on transitional justice, regime type and the quality of democracy both play significant roles in shaping the structural constraints on societal activism and discussion, and on political opposition and contestation. My two cases are both cases of democracies in the periods of analysis, although the quality of democracy has been stronger in Japan than in Turkey. Moreover, shifts in the quality of democracy have influenced some of the domestic factors that I note in these cases, such as the emergence of societal activism in Turkey from the early 1990s.

Regime type is an important and relevant prior or background condition, but not one that determines when change arises or the content of change. Most tellingly, the diversity of policies that countries transitioning to democracy have pursued in the name of truth and/or justice for past crimes and atrocities highlights the inconsistent impact of domestic regime change on official attitudes and policies toward past wrongs. Moreover, Barahona de Brito et al. note that, “just as there can be transitions that produce no accountability, so there can be accountability processes that take place where there is no transition to democracy” (2001b: 10). And Hite and Morlino illustrate how transitions to democracy can lead to widely divergent qualities of democracy and memories of authoritarian pasts, which are in part dependent on “the durability of the previous authoritarian regime” and “the mode of transition from authoritarianism” (2004: 25).

Finally, one international factor – the existence of normal diplomatic relations between the victim and the perpetrator state – seems to be a necessary, but not sufficient precondition to substantial change in the direction of commemoration. This is a key difference between the two cases analyzed in this project, and, as I will demonstrate, partially accounts for the much greater degree of change in Japan’s narrative, as compared to Turkey’s narrative.<sup>68</sup>

### ***1c. International normative influence***

I find that international normative factors – in this case, international norms of truth-seeking and against impunity – do not have as measurable or clear of an influence on changes in official narratives as do international pressures and domestic political dynamics. In part, the relatively weak impact of international norms derives from the strong domestic sources of continuity and resistance in each of these cases, which arise from the domestic coalitions that support and produce each narrative, and from the strength of the ideational and material factors that motivate official and societal actors to continue supporting the narratives in each case. That said, I have found some evidence that these norms, and the networks of international actors that have

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<sup>68</sup> While Japan normalized relations with China in 1972, Turkey does not have normalized diplomatic relations with Armenia. Moreover, the changes in Japan’s narrative arose *after* this normalization, whereas Turkey’s narrative has exhibited limited change, partially due to the lack of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

developed in conjunction with the emergence and institutionalization of these norms, have mattered in both cases analyzed in this project, albeit to an extent that is more limited than the other factors emphasized in this chapter. Importantly, I find that normative factors have been used by actors both to support continuity and to press for change in these official narratives. Thus, like the impact of international pressure on states' narratives, the impact of normative factors cuts in multiple directions.<sup>69</sup>

There are several processes through which international norms, and the constellations of actors and institutions that have developed around or in conjunction with these norms, influence the ways in which actors – especially domestic actors – attempt to shape and defend official narratives.<sup>70</sup>

*First*, international and domestic societal actors can *learn* about strategies for contesting and supporting official narratives from the politics that have shaped other official narratives. For example, the demands of Armenian diasporic groups have, in part, been shaped by learning about the material reparations offered and conciliatory steps taken by other perpetrator states, and their strategies have been influenced by learning from the actions taken by other groups who have been victims of atrocities. Similarly, some Turkish activists 'learned' about the issue of minority rights (in part) from international discourse (and international criticism of Turkey) (Gunaysu 2008), while civil society organizations in Turkey have begun to frame their claims in the language of international human rights.<sup>71</sup> In addition, many of the Turkish activists and academics who have challenged the official narrative had, or subsequently developed, strong connections with activists and researchers outside of Turkey (especially in Armenia, France, Germany and the US), which offered sources of legitimacy for dissident views, along with new information and opportunities.<sup>72</sup> At the same time, Turkish officials have carefully monitored international legal decisions related to genocide, with an eye toward learning from them in their effort to definitively reject the charge of and responsibility for the Armenian Genocide. A key example of this is Turkish officials' reported attention to the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) 2007 ruling that Serbia and Montenegro had not committed and were not responsible for the massacre in Srebrenica, but that the event itself was a genocide.<sup>73</sup> In addition, Turkish

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<sup>69</sup> This point finds resonance in Gentry's (2006) argument that one state's adherence to a norm can be a source of vulnerability and therefore an opportunity for manipulation by another state or actor.

<sup>70</sup> The examples offered in this section are drawn mostly from the Turkish case, but the points apply to both cases (and more generally.)

<sup>71</sup> For example, the human rights advocate Ayşe Günaysu wrote the following in 2009: "Turkey's leaders are becoming more and more susceptible to public protests and bold attempts to change things. They are more responsive to the reactions they are receiving. They feel the need to make a move in some way or another. At least, they can no longer ignore the voices raised. It is seemingly paradoxical that this is a result of increasing contacts with the outside world, which raises the standards in every field. It will be the combined effect of international and local dynamics that will change things in Turkey" (Gunaysu 2009a).

<sup>72</sup> For example, this is evident in Zarakolu 2008b.

<sup>73</sup> See: <http://www.icj-cij.org/court/index.php?pr=1898&pt=3&p1=1&p2=3&p3=1>, accessed on 31 May 2011. According to a newspaper article in 2007, "Government sources told Today's Zaman [newspaper] that Turkish legal experts have currently been studying the legal aspect [sic] of the issues as well as the February decision of the ICJ on Serbia. The court examining the case brought by Bosnia and Herzegovina against Serbia, in its controversial decision of Feb. 26 this year [2007], cleared Serbia of genocide in Bosnia while acknowledging the Serbian killing of Bosnians, at Srebrenica in particular in 1995 when over 7,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were massacred. Thus, Turkish legal experts have also been examining, among other things, whether the ICJ decision on Serbia could bring Turkey closer to clearing it of Armenian genocide allegations" (Sarıbrahimoğlu 2007).

officials have also learned from and strategically adopted the rhetoric of international normative discourse related to memory politics.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, the Turkish government's own strategies further reflect their keen awareness of international norms and practices.

*Second*, normative evaluations attached to terminology matter in the processes through which official narratives are shaped, but not as much as might be expected. For example, while some argue that Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide derives in part from the perceived relative egregiousness of the crime of genocide, the word genocide is not the most significant obstacle to change in Turkey's narrative. Instead, the two most significant motivations that have driven continuities in Turkey's narrative have been the fear that the acceptance of any portion of Armenians' claims would lead to claims for Turkish territory, and the concern that changing the official narrative would fundamentally threaten the legitimacy of the state and its founding narrative.<sup>75</sup> In fact, Turkey's denial of basic facts about the deportation and elimination of the majority of the Ottoman Armenian population predates the creation of the term genocide. Moreover, Turkish officials have long fought to silence *any* reference to these events,<sup>76</sup> and have not been satisfied with compromises that exclude the word genocide and/or do not explicitly mention Turkey or the Ottoman Empire.<sup>77</sup> These facts indicate that the sources of support for the official narrative stem from factors other than normative opprobrium attached merely to the word genocide (or to another word.)<sup>78</sup> However, the normative value and importance of this term has also been used strategically by Turkish officials to bolster support for the argument that the deportation and destruction of Ottoman Armenians should not be called a genocide.<sup>79</sup>

A *third* way in which normative factors have influence is by introducing new actors and sources of funding into the processes through which official narratives are shaped. This mechanism of influence does not necessarily change the positions of official actors or of those societal actors who contest the official narrative, but it has the potential to increase the voice or influence of particular perspectives or approaches. For example, in the past ten years, regional institutions and

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<sup>74</sup> As I highlight in Chapter 5, since 2006, Turkey has strategically appropriated the language of 'reconciliation' and 'dialogue,' claiming that it wants open dialogue with Armenia and 'face the past.' At the same time, Turkey claims that Armenia is refusing to cooperate and engage in dialogue, which Turkish officials further insinuate is because Armenians' claims are not historically or legally sound.

<sup>75</sup> For more on these points, see Chapter 3.

<sup>76</sup> Fatma Ulgen explicitly makes this point, writing that "denial existed in highly sophisticated modalities before the term 'genocide' came to bear prominence in the post-WW2 world order. This underlines the fact that the contemporary political euphoria around the 'g-word' per se is not the whole story when it comes to understanding Turkish denial" (2010: 12).

<sup>77</sup> For example, in 1967, Turkish diplomats lobbied to stop a monument to the genocide from being erected in the town of Montebello, California. After drawn-out debates and politicking, the town council voted to erect the monument, but it "bowed to the State Department's wishes and approved language making no mention of the Genocide or the Ottoman Empire, instead dedicating the monument 'to men of all nations who have fallen victim to crimes against humanity'" (Bobelian 2009: 132). Tellingly, however, the Turkish government was still dissatisfied, despite the fact that the word genocide was not used, and Turkey and the Ottoman Empire were not mentioned. Apparently the Turkish ambassador complained to State department officials that "because the plaque mentioned Armenians, 'it would be obvious' that it targeted Turkey" (*Ibid.*).

<sup>78</sup> There has also been significant contestation over the appropriate term for the Nanjing Massacre. The terms most commonly used to describe this case are: 'massacre,' 'great massacre,' 'incident' and 'holocaust' (Iris Chang 1997).

<sup>79</sup> They argue, especially to international audiences, that the event should not be termed a genocide, because to do so would devalue the meaning of this term and threaten the moral outrage evoked by other ('genuine') cases of genocide, particularly the Holocaust.

transnational organizations have closely followed and/or supported domestic initiatives in Turkey that have focused on human rights in education (e.g., UNICEF), hate speech (the EU Commission Delegation in Turkey), minority rights (the Open Society Institute), and freedom of expression (the European Union). In addition, as Keck and Sikkink (1998) have argued, the interest and involvement of these external actors in domestic human rights issues creates an alternative channel for activists to contest aspects of domestic politics.

*Fourth*, the increasing attention to memory politics on a global scale has increased attention to individual states' narratives of past atrocities (Lebow 2008), and has increased the perceived importance and value of 'recognition,' 'truth' and 'reconciliation' in relation to past atrocities (Mendeloff 2004). As I highlight in Chapter one, this trend has had a varied impact on individual states' narratives of past crimes. One of the ways in which one can trace the influence of the emergence of norms of truth-telling and against impunity is in the increased involvement of third-party states in 'recognizing' other states' past crimes. For example, the dramatic acceleration of third party states' recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the late 1990s and early 2000s is partially attributable to the increased power of these norms.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, as the norm of 'truth-telling' gains strength and attention, it can increase the normative costs of impunity or relativization for perpetrator states. For example, as Japan became one of the world's leading economies in the 1980s, its leaders wanted Japan to have an international *political* role that was commensurate with its international economic status. And in order to strengthen its international political reputation, Japanese officials gradually realized that it might be necessary to accede to some of the demands for greater apology, recognition and compensation. Moreover, increased attention to such issues gives activists greater leverage in attempts to hold public actors accountable, especially in attempts to call politicians to take actions that are consistent with their moral pronouncements (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 24-5). And yet, this has not been a terribly successful strategy in the cases analyzed in this project. For example, despite the fact that, as candidates for President, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama each acknowledged the Armenian Genocide (as a genocide) and promised Armenian-Armenian organizations to do so if elected President; *none* of them used the word genocide once in office.<sup>81</sup>

## ***2. Official actors as producers of official narratives***

The second and third sets of supporting arguments that I develop identify the two broad sets of domestic actors that are involved in shaping the content of states' narratives over time.

The first set of actors consists of *state actors and institutions*, who are the main producers of official narratives. These *state actors* are high-level politicians, civil servants in ministries like foreign affairs and education, and national figureheads, such as the Japanese Emperor or the Turkish President. *State institutions* refer to government ministries, state archives, the military,

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<sup>80</sup> Another important factor, however, is the political activism of Armenian groups, who have pushed for various countries to recognize and/or commemorate the genocide.

<sup>81</sup> However, to offer a counter-example, in the late 1970s Armenians in a number of countries protested the elimination of a reference to the Armenian Genocide from a UN report on genocide, in particular, "publicly invoking the human rights declarations of several member states of the UN Human Rights Commission" (Hovannisian 1986: 128). As a result of this campaign and this use of 'accountability politics,' the UN Human Rights Commission appointed a 'special rapporteur' to investigate and prepare a report on the Armenian Genocide. (For more on this, see Chapter 4.)

the national parliament, and the prime minister's office.<sup>82</sup> In general, state actors are status quo-oriented, and are a key source of continuity in an official narrative. And while they more or less control the production of official narratives, their decisions about the content of an official narrative are not insulated from pressures and influences from within the domestic sphere.<sup>83</sup> Instead, state actors' autonomy in shaping and producing official narratives can be constrained by several factors:<sup>84</sup> inter-elite pressures, which can be influential when the state actors who shape the narrative are politically weaker and therefore need the support of other parties or factions in order to maintain their power;<sup>85</sup> shifts in elite and/or public views of the event, which can increase the need for a shift in the content of the narrative in order to maintain its legitimacy with domestic audiences; and domestic activism that directly challenges the official narrative (e.g., through court cases that challenge aspects of the official narrative, increased media attention/scrutiny, domestic protests, and/or the articulation of counter-narratives.)

Moreover, while the external pressures enumerated above can constrain the autonomy of the state actors who produce such narratives, state actors' control can also vary due to domestic factors. In particular, the level of involvement of official actors in the production (and defense) of an official narrative itself varies across national cases and over time within a single case, due to both material and ideational factors.

In terms of *material factors*, state actors' level of involvement in reinforcing continuity in the official narrative depends on the perceived material stakes of change, with two factors being most prominent. *First*, the relative (material) power of a victim state at a point in time influences how likely the perpetrator state is to respond to a demand for change in the official narrative. Specifically, if the perpetrator state's power is *much* greater than that of the victim state, then the perpetrator state is less likely to respond to demands for change in its narrative by the victim state, or is less likely to respond in the direction desired by the victim state. If the victim state's power is increasing relative to that of the perpetrator state, or if the gap between the power of the victim and perpetrator state is not great (at least according to some measures), then the perpetrator state is more likely to change or consider changing its narrative in the direction desired by the victim state. *Second*, the perceived likelihood of having to pay reparations (in the form of land or money) to individual victims and/or one or more victim states also shapes how

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<sup>82</sup> I treat the state not as a unitary actor with fixed interests, but as an entity that includes a set of different institutions and agents at the national level. As a result, identifying whether and to what extent state institutions are involved in the production, defense and dissemination of the official narrative is one of the empirical tasks of this project.

<sup>83</sup> On this point, my argument contrasts with Stephanie Golob's work on policy frontiers. She argues that "policy frontiers are constructed and perpetuated institutionally via the 'permanent housing' of exiled options inside bureaucracies that not only are insulated from outside constituencies but also are imbued with ideologies that venerate the role of the agency in defending the policy frontier against other agencies, as well as against future chief executives seeking to change course" (2003: 366). In contrast, I argue that state actors' production of an official narrative is *not* completely insulated from societal pressures, especially over time.

<sup>84</sup> Similarly, Lebow and his collaborators found that "institutionalized forms of memory are important but not all-controlling and that leaders exercise only imperfect control over institutional memory" (2006: 15).

<sup>85</sup> Official narratives are not monolithic or consistently uniform at some points in time, both across different indicators and in the actions and words of different official actors. Inasmuch as is possible, I have striven to capture the sometimes-divergent official voices in my measurement of the content of the official narrative. In measuring the content of each official narrative, I have attempted to capture the range of the content (if it is not completely uniform) within phases, which is possible using the continuum that I have constructed.

likely a perpetrator state is to respond to a demand for change in the official narrative, with an inverse relationship holding between these two factors.

## ***2a. The motivations of official actors***

Moreover, states' narratives of dark pasts can support sources of domestic political stability and legitimacy, which can increase their resistance to change, in ideational terms. Importantly, the degree to which this is the case, and the way in which a narrative connects with a state's identity, influence the degree of involvement of state actors in defending an official narrative.<sup>86</sup>

I identify two types of *ideational motivations* that shape official actors' involvement in producing an official narrative of a dark past: legitimacy concerns and stability concerns. I argue that a state is more likely to defend and resist change in an official narrative if the narrative functions as an important source of legitimacy for the state, state institutions, or even particular actors within those institutions; or if the narrative is connected with important sources of political stability for official actors, institutions and/or for the state. I discuss each of these factors in turn in the following two sections.

### *Motivation 1: Legitimacy concerns*

Borrowing from the political scientist Ian Hurd, *legitimacy* is defined as “the normative belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed” (1999: 381). For the purposes of my argument, the ‘actor’ refers to groups of citizens, such as particular interest groups or groups of supporters, or the public as a whole. Broadly speaking, state actors can be motivated to preserve an aspect of their legitimacy vis-à-vis a domestic audience *or* an international audience. In the international relations realm, constructivist scholars have demonstrated that a state's desire for *international* legitimacy (or acceptance in the community of ‘civilized states’) is one factor that can lead to a state's adoption of and adherence to human rights norms (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 903-904; Risse and Ropp 1999: 245). In a complement to this work, I argue that state actors can be motivated to defend an official narrative because changes in the narrative could negatively affect the *domestic* legitimacy of the state, state institutions and/or particular state actors.<sup>87</sup> Thus, if a narrative is connected with key sources of legitimacy for the state and/or state institutions, then state actors are likely to be more involved in defending the official narrative, which is likely to result in a higher degree of continuity in the trajectory of the official narrative over time.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> These factors also influence the degree of involvement of societal actors in contesting an official narrative. I do not theorize societal actors' motivations, however, since my evidence in this area is more limited.

<sup>87</sup> Such connections have been noted by other scholars, but are usually not investigated in this context. For example, Heisler (2008: 20) points out that: “A major reason...for the contentiousness of the past is that some revelations threaten the authority of those in power (commonly including historically dominant groups and cultures, not only current holders of power) and the positive self-concepts of societies and groups within them.” Similarly, Kleinman (1996: 104) observes: “How nations remember is bound up in the question of governance and political power. The organization of national memory – which goes to the heart of questions of regime legitimacy, national identity, and nationalism – is a matter of political survival. This is equally the case between nations as within them.”

<sup>88</sup> Similarly, Stephanie Golob investigates the reasons why certain state policies are highly sticky, or resistant to change, and the processes through which such resistance can be overcome. She refers to the boundaries of such policies as “policy frontiers,” which she defines as “barriers erected by historically held and sacred ideas of sovereignty, security, and national identity that make certain choices unavailable as ‘normal’ policy options” (2003:

For example, the Turkish narrative of the Armenian Genocide is deeply connected with Turkish national identity and the founding national narrative, as well as with the legitimacy of key political institutions in Turkey, especially the military. Consequently, if the official narrative of the ‘Armenian question’ were changed dramatically, this might destabilize both the founding national narrative and the narrative of national identity. It could do so by undermining claims that the Turkish nation and homeland were threatened by greedy and rapacious enemies (by revealing that Ottoman Armenians were innocent victims of genocide, not nationalist rebels and murdering neighbors); and also by undermining the element of national identity that warns Turks to be on guard against internal and external threats to the unity of the Turkish nation (by revealing that the perceived threat posed by Armenians has been largely constructed by the state, and especially by the military.) Moreover, because state institutions have been actively involved in denying a range of facts related to the events of the Armenian Genocide, the honesty (and hence, the legitimacy) of these institutions has become tied in with the maintenance of the official narrative, since change could undermine public trust in these institutions. Thus, in part because of the challenge to national identity and the legitimacy of the state that might follow from a significant change in the content of Turkey’s narrative, a *widening* range of state institutions – including a number of ministries, the national archives, the quasi-official historical society, the Parliament, the military and national officials – has been involved in articulating and defending the official narrative over the past several decades.

### *Motivation 2: Stability concerns*

Concerns related to *stability* can be another motivation for official actors’ involvement in defending and producing an official narrative. Here the term stability refers to concerns about maintaining political support from important constituencies, maintaining an existing political coalition, and/or maintaining the existing level of public support. It also includes concerns about preventing social unrest and/or violence. Thus, I argue that official actors are less likely to change an official narrative if such change would undermine an important source of political support for specific political actors and/or for the existing political coalition.<sup>89</sup> In addition, official actors are less likely to change an official narrative if such change would be likely to prompt violent protest.

For example, Japanese officials have often sought to strike a delicate balance between external demands for progressive change (e.g., demands for greater contrition and for concrete actions to demonstrate the sincerity of official statements) in the official narrative, and the contrary

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361). More importantly, she argues that such policies are so resistant to change because they are connected with “the legitimation needs of those who run the state” (364), and are “bound up ... in the symbolic language of national pride, historical memory, and defense of the nation” (361-2).

<sup>89</sup> This point overlaps with one made above, that inter-elite pressures are one factor that can limit state actors and institutions’ autonomy in shaping an official narrative. While looking at a broader policy realm, Schimmelfennig similarly finds that “when the political costs of compliance [with the conditions demanded in the EU’s political accession process] are high for the target government, that is, when fulfilling EU conditions threatens the survival of the regime or the government, even credible membership incentives prove ineffective” (2008: 918-9). And in a slightly earlier project, Schimmelfennig et al. (2006) argue that the costs of compliance with European Union demands for reform are increased if the demands threaten the security of the state and/or the political position of domestic political leaders.



demands of domestic right-wing groups, both among politicians and from interest groups like the Japan War-Bereaved Veterans Association (*Nihon Izokukai*). The demands by conservative and nationalist groups for Japanese officials to cease their apologies have gotten a lot of traction, especially with politicians from the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). This is in part due to the fact that some of these organizations are well-organized interest groups that can mobilize and get out votes for LDP politicians, whose campaign- and fund-raising activities are tightly controlled by Japan's narrow campaign finance and election rules.<sup>90</sup> Thus, in a number of instances, state officials have been pushed to limit or resist change in the official narrative because of their desire to maintain the support of these key domestic constituencies.

### ***3. Societal actors and domestic contestation***

The second set of domestic actors who influence the content of and changes in states' narratives of dark pasts are those *societal actors* who contest and attempt to shape the content of such narratives. This includes interest groups, academics, the media, and activists.<sup>91</sup>

#### *Process 1: Directly constraining or pressuring official actors*

The first way in which societal actors can influence the content of states' narratives is by directly *bringing new pressure on* the official narrative and/or on the state actors who produce the official narrative. Within the domestic realm, 'pressure' can take a variety of forms, including: publicizing the discovery or publication of new evidence that is not consistent with or even contradicts aspects of the official narrative, calling for change in the official narrative in the media, and making a statement or taking other action that elicits criticism of the official narrative. Moreover, pressure can push for change in the direction of greater contrition and commemoration, or in the direction of lesser acknowledgement of the events. Pressure can also push state actors to maintain the status quo in the face of other challenges.

For example, when MURAYAMA Tomiichi, who was the first Socialist prime minister (PM) in Japan's postwar history, came to power in Japan in 1994, he pledged to issue a sweeping, Diet-sanctioned apology for Japan's aggression and atrocities in World War II. In response, however, powerful societal groups and political factions within the Diet mobilized to oppose an apology (Seraphim 2006: 277), putting pressure on the prime minister that successfully limited the degree of change in the official narrative. Their opposition led to a watered-down statement of remorse from the Diet, which was not the apology that Murayama had desired or promised.<sup>92</sup> In this instance, the involvement of powerful interest groups in mobilizing public support in opposition to a broad apology statement by the Diet, their connections with powerful Diet politicians, and the longstanding opposition to such a step by groups among Diet members from the Liberal Democratic Party together shaped the eventual compromise resolution adopted by the Diet.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Author's interview with political analyst [J-1], Tokyo, July 2008.

<sup>91</sup> Borrowing from Oliver and Marwell (1992: 252), Keck and Sikkink (1998: 14) define *activists* as "people who care enough about some issue that they are prepared to incur significant costs and act to achieve their goals."

<sup>92</sup> And while Murayama himself issued an apology later that year, this was less than he had hoped for and promised.

<sup>93</sup> Moreover, in contrast to the norm for Diet resolutions, this resolution was *not* approved by a unanimous vote, and it was only voted on by one house of the Diet (Mukae 1996).

Moreover, as mentioned above in the context of state actors' stability concerns, a significant source of continuity in the Japanese case has come from constraints that have been imposed by societal actors within Japan – especially conservative and nationalist ones – on official actors and institutions. In particular, the preferences and demands of right-wing ultranationalists and LDP politicians close to or supported by groups close to them have consistently shaped officials' calculations in relation to considerations of change in the official narrative (by pressuring state actors to not make changes, or to move the narrative in the direction of less acknowledgement and less acceptance of responsibility.)

*Process 2: Shaping the context within which the official narrative is produced*

The second process through which societal actors influence the content of official narratives is indirect, by changing the understanding of the event among elites and/or the public, and thereby shaping the context within which the official narrative is produced. This claim resonates with David Art's (2006) argument that broad public debate over "traumatic historical events" can reshape the terms of discussion on "foundational issues," which then changes the way these issues are discussed and dealt with in the future. He further argues that such changes can have a broader impact on other aspects of politics, reshaping the "political environment," influencing the types of appeals that will succeed and fail, and altering elites and citizens' ideas of what is acceptable and unacceptable in political discourse. Building on Art's findings, I argue that if and when state officials consider whether and how to change an official narrative, the direction and outcome of domestic contestation over the past<sup>94</sup> is an important factor that shapes the content of changes that are made. Specifically, I argue that the direction and content of change in an official narrative are influenced by the *direction of domestic contestation* at a given point in time.<sup>95</sup> Thus, if domestic contestation is leaning toward conservative, status-quo positions, then the official narrative will be less likely to change. In contrast, if domestic contestation is tending toward revisionist, status-quo challenging positions, then the official narrative is more likely to change in the direction of greater openness.

Recent changes in the Turkish narrative illustrate this process. In the past decade, changes in the content of the Turkish narrative have been shaped, in part, by the growing domestic discussion about the 'Armenian question.' Over time, this discussion has gradually broken the taboo on the 'Armenian question,' opening the topic up for wide-ranging, domestic attention and debate. Moreover, this burgeoning discourse has made some Turks aware that they know little to nothing about what happened to Armenians (and others) during World War I and its aftermath. This popular curiosity has led to the publication of more books on the topic of the 'Armenian question' and has prompted some Turks to want to find out more about how the nation's and/or their own families' pasts intersect with the fate of Ottoman Armenians during WWI.<sup>96</sup> As a result, the most recent changes in the official narrative have been partially targeted toward *domestic* audiences. For example, given the increasing evidence available within Turkey that

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<sup>94</sup> Contestation over the past is a process in which societal actors challenge and/or support characterizations of the nature and details of a past historical event. An individual or a group can contest (i.e., challenge or support) an official narrative, but the process of contestation refers to the array of efforts to challenge and/or support a narrative at a given point in time.

<sup>95</sup> The 'direction of domestic contestation' is meant to capture the general interpretation of a historical event that is more prevalent among those societal actors who are involved in debating the event at a given point in time.

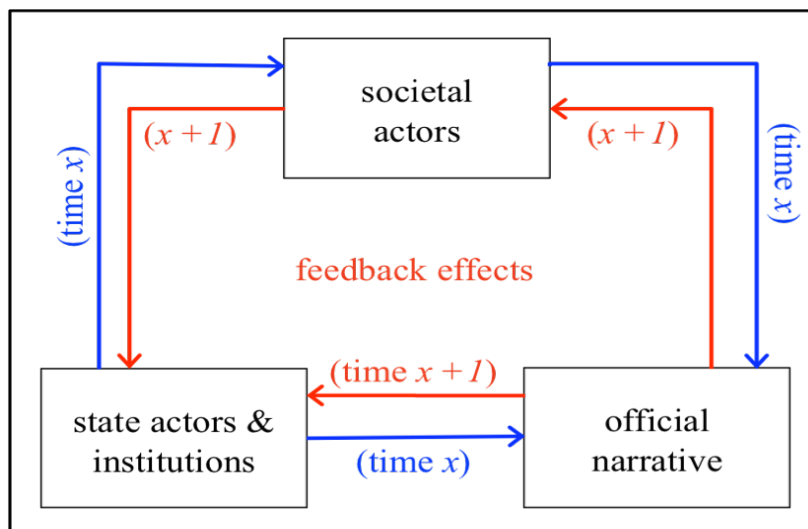
<sup>96</sup> On this, see Chapter 5.

hundreds of thousands of Ottoman Armenians died in the genocide, the official narrative has shifted to acknowledge a much high death toll than it previously did. At the same time, greater effort is also dedicated to rationalizing this high death toll and arguing that the deportation of Ottoman Armenians does not fit the definition of genocide. These shifts in content likely reflect official efforts to maintain a *plausible* official narrative, especially for domestic audiences.

#### 4. Feedback effects<sup>97</sup>

My fourth supporting argument identifies *feedback effects* that connect official actors' production of the narrative and domestic activists' contestation of or support for the official narrative.

I find that the ongoing production and contestation of the official narrative, especially within the domestic sphere, generates significant feedback effects over time, specifically, by prompting the creation of new groups and strategies that can, at later points, influence and shape further changes. Thus, when societal actors organize to contest the content of the official narrative, it is often in response to changes in the official narrative, or in reaction to the efforts of other societal actors to influence the content of the official narrative. In time, the actions and preferences of these societal actors can influence and constrain the official narrative, either by pushing for change and/or enforcing continuity in the official narrative, and can thereby have feedback effects on the official narrative. The processes through which such feedback effects work are illustrated in Figure 2.2 (below).



**Figure 2.2. Feedback effect processes**

In particular, I trace two types of feedback effects: *material* and *ideational*, and I trace these effects on and through two types of domestic actor groups: *official actors* and *societal actors* (especially interest groups). The different types of feedback effects that I identify and trace are captured in Figure 2.3 (below).

<sup>97</sup> My arguments in this section build on comparative work on feedback effects (e.g., Pierson 2004 and 1993; Skocpol 1992; Mettler and Welch 2004; Mettler 2005), in particular the work of Paul Pierson and Kathleen Thelen.

		Actors affected	
		Official actors	Societal groups
Type of feedback effect	Material (resources & incentives)	The commitment of government resources to and participation of government agencies in defending the narrative would lead to continuities in the particular government actors who continue to work on the issue, and in the ways in which government resources are expended on the issue.	Societal actors who are asked to help produce the official narrative would continue to work on the issue.  Views consistent with the official position would be encouraged and supported, leading to more individuals, groups and resources committed to supporting the official position (than those committed to challenging it.)
	Ideational	Successful official strategies to defend the official narrative would be ‘learned’ by official actors, who would then replicate successful strategies and not replicate failing ones.  Official actors who work on the issue would come to believe and/or be invested in the official narrative.	Changes in, the production of and/or challenges to the official narrative would inspire particular societal actors to begin working on the issue, or to renew or redirect their existing work on the issue, in order to oppose or support the official narrative.  The production and domestic dissemination of the official narrative (e.g., in textbooks and official statements) would lead societal actors to believe and/or internalize it.

**Figure 2.3. Observable implications of different types of feedback effects<sup>98</sup>**

#### *Material effects on official actors*

The production of the official narrative can have *material effects* on *official actors* by bringing certain actors and agencies into the production of the official narrative, which gives *resource incentives* to those actors and agencies to continue their involvement in the issue.

#### *Material effects on societal actors*

Likewise, the production of the official narrative can have *material effects* on *societal actors* through both direct and indirect processes. State actors can take actions that empower certain perspectives and/or create new supporters of the official narrative. Over time, these processes can reinforce continuities in the official narrative, by generating more agents of the official position and/or by locking state agents into the official position by creating a larger constituency for the narrative. Moreover, these processes can widen the power gap between the agents and supporters of the official narrative, and opponents and challengers of the official narrative.

<sup>98</sup> This figure is inspired by Pierson’s (1993: 626) model of ‘the dimensions of policy feedback,’ which consists of a 2x3 table with the ‘type of mechanism’ on one axis and the ‘actors affected by [the] feedback mechanism’ on the other axis. I have eliminated one of his categories of actors, and my other categories are slightly different from those in his model. In addition, the feedback processes that I describe are necessarily different from his ‘dimensions of policy feedback,’ since my figure refers to the informal institution of a state’s narrative.

In some cases, state actors can directly involve certain interest groups or societal actors in the production of the official narrative, and these groups and individuals might then remain involved in working on the issue and therefore influence subsequent moments of change in the official narrative.

For example, in the early 1980s, Turkish officials took a number of steps to defend the official narrative of the Armenian Genocide from mounting international pressure, and to disseminate the state's official narrative both domestically and internationally. As part of these efforts, the Turkish government worked with and through non-governmental groups to produce work on this issue that supports the official narrative. More recently, in response to intensified international pressure for change in its narrative, Turkish officials' efforts to recalibrate and disseminate its version of events have involved the creation of and collaboration with several think tanks. As a result of both of these efforts, many of these individuals and groups became new and important voices of support for the state's official narrative, and have also worked to produce evidence and arguments that support the official narrative.

Less directly, the official narrative and related state policies can support and/or empower certain domestic actors and views, and conversely, disempower and discourage other actors and views. In this way, the official narrative (and changes therein) can strengthen certain views and actors,<sup>99</sup> and silence and/or disadvantage dissenting voices and points of view. Over time, the landscape of societal actors fostered by official policies vis-à-vis the official narrative can shape debates over the official narrative.

For example, in the Turkish case, government policies and the interventions of state officials have – in a variety of ways – long discouraged societal actors from getting involved in researching or contesting the official narrative of the ‘Armenian question.’ These policies particularly affected academics, journalists and claims-making in public, especially through laws against and prosecutions of public declarations that dissented from the official narrative. One aspect of these policies was the ongoing state-led process of ethnic homogenization or *Turkification*, which succeeded in encouraging and/or forcing many of Turkey's non-Muslim minority citizens to leave the country. These policies reinforced the domestic silence on this issue by effectively removing potential sources of counter-narratives, and by subtly coercing those who stayed in Turkey to remain silent about the genocide.<sup>100</sup>

### *Ideational effects on official actors*

In terms of *ideational effects*, over time, *official actors* can *learn* which strategies are more and less effective in defending the official narrative, which is another example of an ideational feedback effect. Additionally, over time official actors involved in the production of the official

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<sup>99</sup> This point builds on Thelen's claim that “institutions are not neutral coordinating mechanisms but in fact reflect, and also reproduce and magnify, particular patterns of power distribution in politics .... political arrangements and policy feedbacks actively facilitate the organization and empowerment of certain groups while actively disarticulating and marginalizing others. The distributional biases in particular institutions or policies ‘feed back’ so that ‘over time, some avenues of policy become increasingly blocked, if not entirely cut off’ as ‘decisions at one point in time can restrict future possibilities by sending policy off onto particular tracks’ (Weir 1992:18, 19)” (1999: 394).

<sup>100</sup> For more on this, see Chapter 4.

narrative can come (more strongly) to believe in and/or be emotionally committed to the content of the official narrative.

### *Ideational effects on societal actors*

Changes in an official narrative can also have *ideational effects* on *societal actors* by *motivating* them to take action, either to oppose *or* support the official narrative. In this process, new statements of and changes in official narratives can *motivate* societal actors to mobilize in opposition to or support of an official narrative. Societal activism by one group (Group A) can also inspire other societal actors to get involved in or renew their involvement in contesting official narratives, either because they support or oppose the actions of Group A.<sup>101</sup> Thus, contrary to those who contend that apologies and foreign pressure for apologies only risk backlash from domestic conservatives (Lind 2008 and 2005), I find that actors *across* the political spectrum mobilize in relation to and shape the content of official narratives. In time, the actions and preferences that arise from these newly motivated societal actors can influence the production of the official narrative by bringing new pressure on the narrative, influencing the content of new changes and/or reinforcing continuities.

For example, in the wake of the 1982 textbook controversy in Japan,<sup>102</sup> there were a variety of domestic (and some international) responses to this dispute over an aspect of Japan's official narrative, and to the changes in the narrative that resulted from this controversy. Over time, some of the activism that was inspired by this controversy brought new pressure to bear on the official narrative. To give one example: in response to the textbook controversy, a right-wing organization, the National Conference to Defend Japan (*Nihon o Mamoru Kokumin Kaigi*), decided to write a history textbook that would not include as much coverage of wartime aggression and atrocity and would instead cover more positive aspects of Japan's history (Nozaki 2002: 610). In a clear example of feedback effects on the government's position, this textbook's tentative approval by the Ministry of Education in the beginning of 1986 prompted the second textbook controversy in June 1986, thus renewing both international and domestic attention to and pressure on the government's narrative (Nozaki 2002: 610-1; Shibuichi 2008).

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<sup>101</sup> The anthropologist Lisa Yoneyama observes (2001: 323) that "Production of any overarching narratives about the past inevitably incites various contestations and struggles over historical truths." Moreover, the late Japanese historian IENAGA Saburo aptly noted the back-and-forth of domestic mobilization around historical memories, stating: "The dynamism of history calls for reactionary movement whenever the opposite force proves successful" (Yvonne Chang 1997).

<sup>102</sup> In June 1982 the major newspapers in Japan widely reported that the Ministry of Education had changed the guidelines for textbook publishers' coverage of the Second Sino-Japanese War. While several changes were reported in the domestic coverage of the new textbook guidelines, two changes in particular received the most attention. "The most controversial point in the textbook revision was the change from '*shinryaku*' (invade and plunder) to '*shinko*' (enter and assault), or even to the neutral '*shinshutsu*' (advance into), in the description of pre-1945 Japanese activities on the Asian continent" (Yang 2001: 62). While it was quickly revealed that the most controversial changes were not, in fact, new changes, but were rather guidelines that the Ministry of Education had been encouraging textbook publishers to follow for over a decade, the controversy did not abate at all (Nozaki 2002: 606). Instead, in the month following the domestic coverage of these purported changes in textbook guidelines, it developed into a regional controversy. This controversy was significant for several reasons, two of which I want to highlight here. First, this controversy is commonly accepted as the moment in which attention to Japan's narratives of its WWII-related crimes internationalized. Second, this controversy led to a change in the Ministry of Education's textbook guidelines, which led to changes in coverage of Japan's WWII-era crimes in textbooks that were submitted for approval in the following year or two.

In addition, the dissemination of the official narrative within the domestic sphere can lead particular societal actors (and the general public) to internalize the content of the official narrative.

For example, the wide dissemination of the official narrative within Turkish society, especially through textbooks and other education programs at the secondary and tertiary levels, combined with the Turkish state's active discouragement of the development of counter-narratives, has meant that the official narrative of the 'Armenian question' is all that Turkish citizens learned until relatively recently.

### *Latent sources of change*

Finally, in identifying the actors, political arrangements and motivations that support the status quo in an historical narrative, this project also points to latent potential sources of change. If the actors, political arrangements or motivations that support the status quo change, then the official narrative is more likely to change. This point builds on the insight of historical institutionalists, especially Kathleen Thelen and Paul Pierson, who observe that understanding the sources of institutional continuity can reveal potential sources of change in those institutions.<sup>103</sup> For example, if the political parties or government officials who are in power change and are replaced with others whose legitimacy or history is less connected with the events in the question and/or with the narrative of the events, then the narrative is more likely to change.<sup>104</sup>

For example in Turkey, the state's narrative of the Armenian Genocide is most strongly connected with aspects of Kemalist ideology (Ulgen 2010),<sup>105</sup> which has been the core legitimizing ideology for the mainstream and secularist political parties and key political institutions in Turkish politics for much of Turkey's modern history. In late 2002, however, an Islamic political party – the Justice and Development Party – whose political history and motivating ideology is *not* connected with Kemalism, came to power in the national election. Initially, *AK Parti's* leaders gave indications that they were willing to consider changing elements of the official position on the Armenian question. Despite these signals, however, the AKP has been constrained in the degree of movement it has on this issue by the entrenchment of the official narrative in, and its continual reproduction by, a broad range of government ministries and institutions. And yet, while the official narrative has not significantly changed under AKP's rule, the government has taken a number of pragmatic steps in the direction of

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<sup>103</sup> For example, Thelen argues that "understanding moments in which fundamental political change is possible requires an analysis of the particular mechanisms through which the previous patterns were sustained and reproduced. ... an understanding of political change is inseparable from—and indeed rests on—an analysis of the foundations of political stability" (1999: 399). Likewise, Pierson writes that "understanding the preconditions for particular types of institutional change requires attentiveness not only to the pressures for reform but also to the character and extent of *resistance* to such pressures. Change and stability are two sides of the same coin. The successful generation of grievances against particular institutional arrangements must be understood as partly a breakdown in the factors reinforcing the status quo. An adequate theory of institutional development must pay sustained attention to the issue of institutional resilience" (2004: 141-2).

<sup>104</sup> This example draws on my argument about the legitimacy concerns that can motivate state actors' involvement in defending an official narrative (see above.)

<sup>105</sup> Kemalism is the official ideology of the Turkish state that was developed and espoused by the founder of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. This ideology set out six basic tenets for the Republic of Turkey: secularism, republicanism, populism, nationalism, statism and reformism.

change, which has arguably been possible because of the dramatically reduced ideational stakes for AKP members, as compared with the political parties and actors who are connected to the Kemalist establishment.

In France, a significant change in the official narrative of the French Vichy regime's collaboration with the Nazis in deporting French Jews during World War II came after Jacques Chirac replaced François Mitterrand as the French President in 1995, which marked the end of Mitterrand's long political career. While Mitterrand had been part of the French *Résistance* to the Nazi occupation during WWII, he had also worked as a bureaucrat in the Vichy Regime in the early part of the Occupation (Riding 1994; Golsan 2006: 73). This personal involvement in the Vichy Regime may explain Mitterrand's reluctance to shift the official narrative significantly to the extent of condemning the collaborationist regime. In contrast, Jacques Chirac, who did not have a personal connection to the Vichy Regime and "as a lifelong Gaullist ... ha[d] always identified with General de Gaulle and his battle against Vichy from exile in London" (Simons 1995), became the first French President to apologize officially on behalf of France for the Vichy regime's involvement in the Holocaust. This occurred "in a 1995 speech by President Chirac in which he emphasised the active support of the French state for the murderous policies of the occupiers and described it memorably as a 'dette imprescriptible [eternal debt]'" (Stefan Berger 2010: 130).

### ***Falsifiability***

By way of conclusion, let me briefly address how the arguments developed above could be falsified.<sup>106</sup> *First*, my claim that international pressures are more likely than domestic pressures to prompt official actors to consider changing the content of an official narrative would be falsified if analyses of other cases demonstrate that changes in a given official narrative more commonly arise in response to domestic pressures than in response to international pressures. *Second*, my argument would be falsified if it were shown that the content and direction of change in these or another narrative were largely the result of international pressures, and were therefore *not* significantly determined by domestic actors and processes. *Third*, my claim that official actors are not completely insulated from pressures by societal actors and by the general domestic context within which the official narrative is produced over time would be falsified if it were shown that this is not the case and that instead, official actors are impervious to domestic pressure and contestation, and that domestic contestation is not a significant shaper of the content of changes. And *fourth*, my claim that domestic contestation often involves a back and forth of activity, with actions by state actors and/or by particular societal actors prompting reactions and counter- or supporting actions by other societal actors, thereby generating feedback effects over time; would be falsified if it were demonstrated that this dynamic does not occur across the political spectrum within the domestic sphere (i.e., if only groups on the right mobilize in response to changes in official narratives, as Jennifer Lind seems to indicate), and/or if such responsive mobilization did not influence the ongoing production of the official narrative in any noticeable way.

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<sup>106</sup> The generalizability of the arguments developed in this project is addressed in the section on 'Scope conditions and generalizability' in Chapter 1.



### – Chapter 3 – Turkey's Narrative of the Armenian Genocide

“It is a virtue of the Turkish nation that it quickly forgets the past.”

-- Turkish President Kenan Evren, 10 February 1989<sup>107</sup>

“These Armenian efforts, based on unsupported claims, are among those issues that Ankara has great sensitivities over. This is one of the important bases determining Turkey's relations with any other country.”

-- Turkish Foreign Minister İsmail Cem, May 2000<sup>108</sup>

#### ***Introduction***

In the near century since the Armenian Genocide occurred, the majority of scholarship and writing (outside of Turkey) on the deportation of Ottoman Armenians has concluded that this was a genocide.<sup>109</sup> However, the Turkish government has long disputed the characterization of these events as genocide, and has instead presented an alternative set of facts and interpretations regarding the 1915 deportation of Ottoman Armenians.<sup>110</sup>

Over time, the incongruity between the Turkish government's position on this issue, and external actors' assessment of these events, has been a source of political and historical contestation. Over the past thirty-five years, international pressures from various sources have attempted to influence change in Turkey's official narrative. In particular, groups and states outside of Turkey have tried to influence change in the official Turkish narrative of the Armenian Genocide through scholarship and by lobbying for international recognition.<sup>111</sup> In addition, from the mid-1970s through the mid-1980s, Armenian terrorists murdered Turkish diplomats in a violent effort to force Turkey to recognize the genocide. In addition to these outside pressures for change,

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<sup>107</sup> This statement was made by Turkish President Kenan Evren in a speech at the opening ceremony of the ‘Armenian massacre section’ (which depicts massacres *by* Armenians) of the Erzurum Museum on 10 February 1989 (Gultekin 1989).

<sup>108</sup> This statement was quoted in an article in the Turkish newspaper *Hürriyet* that was published on 3 May 2000, and which was translated and reprinted by the BBC Monitoring Service (*BBC Monitoring Service* 2000). It was made by Cem in a meeting with the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

<sup>109</sup> A large body of evidence has documented the genocidal nature of these events. See Chapter 1 for key citations.

<sup>110</sup> Some recent official publications include: Halaçoğlu 2007; Akter 2006; Özdemir 2007; Özdemir and Sarıay 2007; Sonyel 2001. Many historians who work in Turkey have published work in line with the official narrative. A key example is the work of Türkayya Ataöv (e.g., 1984a, 1984b, 1985a, 1985b, 1985c, 1986a, 1986b and 1986c). In addition, a small number of scholars outside Turkey have published work that is consistent with the Turkish government's position that the events did not amount to genocide, most notably: McCarthy 1983, 1995 and 2006; Lowry 1990; Lewy 2005; Erickson 2006 and 2008; Gunter 2011.

<sup>111</sup> Uruguay was the first state to legislatively recognize the massacres of Armenians with the passage of a law in 1965 that commemorated the ‘Armenian martyrs’ who were ‘slain in 1915.’ Since then, a number of national parliaments and heads of states have acknowledged the Armenian Genocide and/or tragedy with public statements and commemorative resolutions. See <http://www.armenian.ch/forum/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=1219> for a list of states and others who have recognized the events of 1915. On recognition efforts, see: Bobelian 2009: 164-206, 225-228; Bloxham 2005: 215-234.

since the early 1990s, the Turkish narrative of the ‘Armenian question’<sup>112</sup> has been challenged from within Turkish society by a small but growing number of academics, journalists, publishers and civil society organizations.

In response to some of these pressures, the Turkish narrative of the Armenian Genocide has changed several times over the past six decades. From 1950 through the late-1970s, the issue was denied and silenced; but from 1981, the official narrative shifted to include references to the events, but ones that largely involved mythmaking and relativizing; and from 2001, the official narrative ceased silencing and outright denying the events, began to acknowledge *basic* facts about the deportation and the deaths of Armenians, and also began to more strongly relativize the events. Underneath these broad changes in the content of the narrative, however, some themes and arguments have continued, others have been dropped from the narrative, and some new arguments have been added.

Along with these changes, and with the maturation of Turkish civil society, different opinions have emerged on the question of what factors are most likely to lead to *further* change in the Turkish narrative of the Armenian Genocide. On one hand, a majority of domestic actors in Turkey – both those who support the official version of events, and also those who challenge and disagree with the official narrative – claim that Turkey and Turkish society should be left alone to discuss and debate this issue without international interference and pressure. And yet, others argue that the official narrative of the Armenian Genocide will not change *without* external pressure.

These competing assertions provide a substantive frame for my analysis, marking out two clearly opposing views about the sources and processes of change in Turkey’s narrative. In this and the next two chapters, I carefully trace changes in the content and agents of Turkey’s narrative over the past sixty years. As I do so, I assess the impact of international pressures, domestic activism, and international and domestic structural change on the changes and continuities that I have identified in the official narrative.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will put in place the necessary details for the empirical analysis that follows in the next two chapters. First, I flesh out in greater detail the different views about the sources of change and continuity in Turkey’s narrative. Next, I describe how the broad arguments developed in this dissertation apply to this case. In the following section, I outline the research that I have conducted, the independent variables considered, and the indicators that I have analyzed to identify and assess changes and continuities in the official narrative (i.e., in the dependent variable.) After that, I outline basic facts about the Armenian Genocide, and discuss the elements of the genocide that are disputed and debated among historians and by the Turkish government. Following this historical overview, I review the political factors that shaped the narrative that was initially formulated in the wake of the genocide. Finally, at the end of the chapter I outline the four phases that I have identified in the trajectory of Turkey’s narrative.

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<sup>112</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 1, in Turkish this issue is most often referred to as ‘*Ermeni sorunu*’ or ‘*Ermeni meselesi*,’ both of which mean ‘the Armenian question/problem/issue.’ For the most part I will write the phrase ‘Armenian question’ without quotes, for simplicity’s sake.

### *Existing hypotheses about the sources of change and the effects of international pressure*

Within Turkey, many argue that international pressure on this issue has a counterproductive effect,<sup>113</sup> further entrenching the official Turkish narrative, stymieing attempts at rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia, playing into the hands of nationalist politicians,<sup>114</sup> and contributing to the hardening and expansion of nationalist sentiments among the Turkish public. One interviewee argued that whenever Armenian Genocide resolutions are passed in other countries, they put Turkish-Armenian relations and any positive developments in this relationship into danger. For example, when the French President Jacques Chirac signed a bill that recognized the Armenian Genocide in January 2001, this interviewee argued that this led to the cancellation of a meeting that was supposed to have taken place between undersecretaries from the Turkish and Armenian foreign ministries the following week in Geneva (*Turkish Daily News* 2002c).<sup>115</sup> Moreover, international pressure is said to provoke ultra-nationalist backlashes and to feed growing nationalism in Turkey (Göçek 2007b). In February 2000, an article in the *Turkish Daily News* asserted that “these attempts - acceptance of Armenian resolutions - in France and other EU countries have led to increased nationalistic emotions in Turkey. Many people in Turkey who previously favored Europe no longer have the same good feelings for European Union countries” (*Turkish Daily News* 2000b). Similarly, in 2007 the Turkish sociologist Ayhan Aktar wrote: “A considerable proportion of the Turkish public has become convinced since the late 1990s that the pressures exerted on the nation by the Armenian diaspora and European parliaments to recognize the ‘so-called Armenian genocide’ are another imperialist plot to divide the Turkish fatherland...[And] over the last two years [i.e., 2005-7] conservative and nationalist political circles in Turkey have also exploited the Turkish-Armenian debate as a means of opposing the reform processes and to hinder further negotiations with the EU” (242-3).<sup>116</sup> In addition, one person who works on this issue commented that before 2005, many people in Turkey were curious to learn more about Armenians and the Armenian issue, but that since 2005, things have changed, in part due to international pressure on Turkey, which has caused everyone in Turkey to retreat to his or her respective corner and close up.<sup>117</sup> Finally, another interviewee noted that, when legislative resolutions have been considered in foreign states, nationalistic feelings have increased on both sides, making it even more risky to be involved in this already-risky issue.<sup>118</sup>

Another set of arguments – mostly made by civil society actors in Turkey – is that change on this issue is most likely to come from internal debate within Turkish society, dialogue between Turks and Armenians, and direct engagement between Turkey and Armenia.<sup>119</sup> In an article published in late January 2007, Etyen Mahçupyan, who is a prominent Turkish Armenian journalist, referred to his and the late Hrant Dink’s efforts to convince members of the Armenian diaspora

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<sup>113</sup> For example, Açar and Rüma make this argument (2007).

<sup>114</sup> Author’s interview with Turkish academic [T-1], Ankara, April 2008. As noted in Chapter 1, given the sensitive nature of this topic in Turkey, I am not giving interviewees’ names.

<sup>115</sup> Author’s interview with Turkish businessman [T-26], Ankara, March 2009.

<sup>116</sup> Echoing this, a Turkish academic told me that these legislative efforts feed into the hands of conservatives and nationalists, who claim that this is being used instrumentally by Western states to weaken Turkey (Author’s interview with Turkish academic [T-1], Ankara, April 2008).

<sup>117</sup> Author’s interview with civil society actor in Turkey [T-2], Istanbul, May 2008.

<sup>118</sup> Author’s interview with Turkish businessman [T-26], Ankara, March 2009.

<sup>119</sup> E.g., Author’s interview with a political scientist [T-37], Istanbul, May 2008.

that change in Turkey should be allowed to come from within. Similarly, a Turkish political scientist and public emphasized that civil society activists' efforts to encourage debate and to shift public opinion on the Armenian question in Turkey have been rendered very difficult by one single word – genocide. He argued that members of the Armenian diaspora should not use the word genocide so that Turkish civil society can have the space to influence change in the public's views on this issue, to get Turks to realize that there were massacres of Armenians and that this was a real tragedy.<sup>120</sup> A Turkish businessman further argued that the international community should give Turkey time to look into and come to its own understanding of the history related to the Armenian question, because Turkey is new to this issue and did not know about the Armenian question until the past couple of decades.<sup>121</sup> Finally, international pressures are argued to put the small, relatively vulnerable Turkish-Armenian community in a more difficult position.<sup>122</sup>

In contrast, others argue that, given the strength of the state and the weakness of Turkish civil society, bottom-up efforts are not likely to change the official narrative. For instance, when I asked about the impact of Turkish civil society organizations' activities and projects on government policies, one actor involved in these activities answered that the direct impact on policy is "very limited."<sup>123</sup> Likewise, a Turkish academic noted that civil society organizations in Turkey have "very little, if any" influence on government policies, and despite the fact that recent civil society activities on the Armenian question have received a lot of attention in the media, such activities have not had much of an impact on peoples' views in Turkey.<sup>124</sup> More pointedly, an EU diplomat argued that while civil society organizations in Turkey can bring excellent ideas and proposals to the table, and have done some amazing things on the Armenian issue, they have not changed much in policy terms. Moreover, this diplomat contended that bottom-up efforts will not change the Turkish narrative of the Armenian question, and that in order for change to occur on this issue, the state first needs to send a strong signal that it is ready for a different interpretation of history.<sup>125</sup> (This, of course, prompts the question of what will lead the state to decide that it is ready for such a change.)

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<sup>120</sup> Author's interview with a Turkish political scientist [T-27], Ankara, May 2008.

<sup>121</sup> Author's interview with Turkish businessman [T-3], Ankara, March 2009.

<sup>122</sup> In a June 1998 interview the Armenian Patriarch Mesrob Mutafyan said: "'The state of Armenia, the Armenian Diaspora, the Turkish government, all three have different views and opinions ... when these three shoot at each other, we are right in the middle'" (Hemming 1998).

<sup>123</sup> Author's interview with civil society actor in Turkey [T-30], Istanbul, April 2009.

<sup>124</sup> Author's interview with Turkish academic [T-11], Istanbul, March 2009. An example given was the September 2005 conference on Ottoman Armenians during the demise of the empire, "İmparatorluğun Çöküş Döneminde Osmanlı Ermenileri: Bilimsel Sorumluluk ve Demokrasi Sorunları [The Ottoman Armenians during the Demise of the Empire: Issues of Democracy and Scientific Responsibility]," which was held at Bilgi University in Istanbul from 23-25 September 2005.

<sup>125</sup> Author's interview with EU diplomat [T-28], Ankara, March 2009. Despite this diplomat's pessimism about the impact of civil society activities on state policy, the EU's policy is to engage with and encourage both bottom-up and top-down reform efforts in Turkey. As part of the former, the EU Commission has funded and is currently funding a number of civil society projects in Turkey, including ones that: systematically track hate speech in the Turkish media, study the role of education as a means to reconciliation on the 'Kurdish question,' and encourage the development of greater press freedom.

Finally, some views fall in between these two extremes. For example, some have observed that civil society efforts have a diffuse impact and do not directly influence the official narrative,<sup>126</sup> and others concede that without international pressure, this issue is likely to have remained silenced in Turkey.<sup>127</sup> Finally, one interviewee argued that international recognition of the Armenian Genocide has a “paradoxical” effect: on one hand, such efforts “irritate” people in Turkey, but they also make people aware of the issue.<sup>128</sup>

### *Overview of my arguments*

In these chapters, I trace how the content of the official narrative and strategies to defend it have changed over the past several decades, focusing in particular on: the representation of the Armenian question in textbooks used in Turkish high school history courses, in official statements and publications about the issue, in commemorations and other symbolic actions related to this issue, and in policies related to the Armenian question. In the next few pages, I outline several arguments about the sources of change and continuity in Turkey’s narrative, for which I offer evidence in this and the next two chapters.

### *On the sources of change*

Consistent with the overarching argument developed in this project, I demonstrate that, over the course of the past thirty-plus years, the gradual accumulation of *international pressures* for change in Turkey’s narrative prompted Turkish officials to consider whether and how to change the official narrative at two key points. First, international pressures that developed in the mid- to late-1970s prompted Turkish officials to implement changes in the content of and strategies to disseminate and defend the official narrative from the early 1980s. Then, similar and newer international pressures that developed in the 1990s led Turkish officials to again make changes in the content and dissemination of the official narrative in the early 2000s. In particular, two types of international pressure were the most significant in leading to the changes in 1981 and 2001: one was the extended period of Armenian terrorism against Turkish diplomats from the 1970s through the 1980s, while the second was other states’ recognition of the Armenian Genocide, especially powerful allies of Turkey. And yet, in response to these pressures, the Turkish government did not take immediate action to change its narrative. Rather, changes arose only after international and domestic attention to this issue had been significantly heightened as a result of these pressures.

Thus, I argue that identifying relevant international pressures is not sufficient for understanding the changes that officials made in the content and strategies to defend the official narrative. In both of these junctures, the *motivations of state actors* are crucial to understanding *how* they chose to adjust the official narrative in response to these international pressures. In addition, in the changes that occurred in the early 1980s, *domestic* political events determined *when* state officials responded to the building pressures and took action to reformulate the content and

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<sup>126</sup> Author’s interview with activist in Turkey [T-4], Istanbul, May 2008.

<sup>127</sup> Author’s interview with Turkish academic [T-5], Istanbul, May 2008. Another interviewee acknowledged that the terror attacks of the 1970s and 1980s, while morally unacceptable, had increased recognition of the events of 1915 (Author’s interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24a], Ankara, May 2008).

<sup>128</sup> Author’s interview with activist in Turkey [T-4], Istanbul, May 2008.

dissemination of the official narrative. Moreover, as is the case in more of the phases of the Japanese narrative, the pressures and constraints imposed by societal actors were an important factor in the changes that were made in the Turkish narrative from 2001.

I also highlight how external pressures have elicited *multifaceted and multivalent responses* in both the content of the official narrative and in the strategies developed by Turkish officials to defend it. This finding contrasts with the argument that foreign pressures on Turkey or on other states (Lind 2008) to apologize for or recognize past atrocities produce uniformly negative reactions. For example, Armenian terrorism, combined with increased international recognition of the genocide, prompted Turkish officials to end their official domestic silence about the genocide in the early 1980s. Thus, the official narrative shifted to denying the events and mythmaking about them, along with the continued silencing of many aspects of the genocide. At the same time, however, state officials also developed a set of diplomatic, institutional and rhetorical strategies to more effectively defend and disseminate the official narrative, both domestically and internationally. As a result, while the net effect of these changes might be perceived as the strengthening of official denial of the genocide, the changes also included some degree of acknowledgement of the event. In a similar manner, in each phase of the narrative, as more details of the genocide have been acknowledged, the events have also been relativized and rationalized, and new defenses have been developed.

In addition to these international pressures, I show how structural changes and domestic contestation have influenced changes in the official narrative. *International structural changes* in the early 1990s – notably, the end of the Cold War, the emergence of an independent Republic of Armenia, and the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan – led Turkish officials (in part) to make subtle changes in the content of the official narrative in the mid- and late-1990s. In addition, *domestic contestation* over the official narrative – especially in the form of challenges to the official narrative that began to emerge in the early- to mid-1990s and were noticeable by the early 2000s – influenced state actors' reshaping of the narrative in the early 2000s.

Finally, these chapters illustrate the many ways in which Turkish officials have *resisted* norm-inspired pressures to change their narrative, including through rhetorical and strategic attempts to manipulate aspects of the norms of truth-seeking and against impunity to their own advantage. More generally, I identify a number of mechanisms through which international norms have influenced the political dynamics within which this narrative has been shaped over time, while emphasizing that material pressures and other ideational considerations have been more salient over the course of the analysis.

### *The central role of official actors*

In addition to highlighting the independent variables that led officials to change their narrative, these chapters trace the active and extensive involvement of a range of state actors and institutions in producing and defending the Turkish government's narrative of the Armenian question. Throughout its modern history, military and bureaucratic elites have fundamentally shaped the political and social arena in Turkey, framing the beliefs and knowledge of the Turkish public, stifling the development of an independent civil society, and accounting for the

persistence of debilitating taboos within the public sphere.<sup>129</sup> I argue that, on the issue of the Armenian question, military and bureaucratic elites – especially in the military’s National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*, MGK), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA, *Dışişleri Bakanlığı*), the National Education Ministry (*Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı*, MEB), and the state and military archives – have been largely responsible for setting and defending the state’s official narrative throughout the Republican period.<sup>130</sup> Since the mid-1920s, Turkish diplomats and officials have worked assiduously to suppress references to the genocide. In the early 1980s, Turkish bureaucrats and officials developed a multi-pronged strategy to defend and articulate the official narrative, using a variety of government agencies and focusing on gaining the support of domestic and foreign audiences. Moreover, this set of strategies was then replicated by officials over the subsequent two decades, especially since 2001. As a result, despite changed domestic and international contexts and the coming to power of a non-establishment party in Turkey, the state’s narrative of the Armenian question has exhibited remarkable continuity.

### *The motivations of official actors*

An important question is then: Why have state actors and institutions in Turkey remained so committed to defending this narrative over the course of the past ninety years? The short answer is that the perceived material and ideological stakes of this issue have been and continue to be high for individual state actors, for state institutions and for the state as a whole.

In *material* terms, Turkish officials frequently argue that acknowledgement of the ‘Armenian claims’ is only the first demand, and that this demand will inevitably and inexorably lead to demands for Turkey to surrender parts of its territory and to compensate Armenian descendants of victims and survivors of the genocide.<sup>131</sup> This fear stretches back to the genocide, the war of independence and the founding of the Republic, and continues to be articulated and believed by Turkish officials. For example, Kaplan found in the late 1980s that “there [wa]s a widespread fear among officials and policy makers that Armenians covet Turkey’s southern and eastern provinces” (2006: 198). And a speech by the Turkish Prime Minister Yıldırım Akbulut in the Turkish parliament on 21 February 1990 highlights this concern. He explained:

“In determining its stand on this matter, Turkey has attached importance, above all, to ascertaining the real aim of the resolutions that the Armenians are trying to extract from forums such as the UN Human Rights Commission, the European Parliament, and the U.S. Senate. Detailed assessments of this issue have led us to believe that the Armenians and other circles that support the resolutions view a U.S. Congressional resolution that legitimizes their allegations of so-called genocide as the first stage of a long-term political strategy. In actual fact, leaders of Armenian communities ... have declared ... at every opportunity that these resolutions will constitute the basis for their future claims for compensation and territory. ... In view of these facts, Turkey has come to the conclusion

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<sup>129</sup> Analysts and observers of Turkish politics often make a distinction between the elected government and the so-called ‘deep state,’ which consists of elements of the military, allied institutions and other influential but usually unelected actors in Turkish society.

<sup>130</sup> The Republican period is the period since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey on 29 October 1923.

<sup>131</sup> This is one of the core arguments in Fatma Ülgen’s dissertation (2010). Göçek (2011: 41) and Akçam (2004) also make this point.

that efforts to make the international community accept and confirm the so-called Armenian genocide must be stopped. ... Consequently, it is out of the question to make concessions from our fundamental position, to create the impression that we are open to negotiations, to participate in the efforts to seek a compromise text, or to adopt any attitude that may create the impression that we might agree to a diluted alternative bill aimed at satisfying Armenian voters in the United States” (*TRT Television Network* 1990).

Moreover, in addition to this significant material factor, since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the denial of the genocide and ethnic cleansing that were part of the nation’s founding history has been a fundamental (if silent) part of Turkey’s national identity, and is tied in with the legitimacy of key political institutions in Turkey.<sup>132</sup> As a result, several *ideational* motivations further explain Turkish officials’ commitment to the maintenance of the official narrative. In the paragraphs below I develop several points related to this core observation.

Turkey was founded in the face of external attempts by Britain, Russia, Greece, Italy and France to carve up Ottoman territories in the wake of the Empire’s defeat in WWI, and against the backdrop of the Empire’s tremendous territorial losses in the prior decades. The War of Independence (which in Turkish is termed *Kurtuluş Savaşı*, *İstiklâl Harbi*, or *Millî Mücadele*) expelled the occupying armies from Anatolian territory and led to the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923.<sup>133</sup> Taking these events as the nation’s starting point, the founding narrative emphasizes that the military and ordinary Turks together preserved the sovereignty and unity of Turkey’s territories, especially in eastern Anatolia, for the creation of the new Republic (Onar 2009: 3; Ülgen 2010: 105). It further characterizes Turkey as a nation that is surrounded by enemies, both internally and externally, and Turks as a people that have no friends and can rely on no one but themselves.<sup>134</sup> For example, in June 1987 the Turkish President Kenan Evren warned a Turkish audience that: “the Turkish nation has no friends, it only has itself. Therefore, we must love and respect each other. Only in this way can we strengthen our unity and solidarity against such treacherous moves from without” (*Ankara Domestic Service* 1987c). Turkish nationalism also calls on Turkey’s citizens and leaders to protect Turkey from divisive (*bölücü*) threats to the unity, sovereignty and security of the nation.<sup>135</sup> Consequently, admitting that the elimination of Armenians and other non-Muslim minorities was intentional could delegitimize the narrative of the founding moment as one of victimhood and national salvation (Akçam 2004: 35). Moreover, admitting that Ottoman Armenians were not traitors who had allied with enemies, killed Turks and conspired to steal territory, but were instead victims of aggressive state policies

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<sup>132</sup> Fatma Ülgen argues that “the massive ethnic cleansing of the Christians during the Great War and their capital changing hands in the making of a Turkish-Muslim bourgeoisie accounts for an important part of the social origins of ... Turkish politics and the ideological landscape of modern Turkey. The denial of the violent incidents of the Great War served a vital function in the process of myth-making about the origins of modern Turkey and in the formation of Turkish national-identity. The ‘islamisation’ of the lands of the ‘fatherland’ (*vatan*) constituted the very first stage of ... Turkish nationalism and the Armenian deportations during the Great War were the first leg of this undertaking” (2010: 94). Similarly, the sociologist Fatma Müge Göçek argues that the break with the past, which included the silencing of the “collective violence against the minorities,” has been at the core of Turkish national identity since the founding of the Republic (2011: 23).

<sup>133</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is revered in Turkey as the leader of the War of Independence and the founder of the Republic.

<sup>134</sup> On this, see: Akçam 2004: 39, 50; Göçek 2011: 35; Jenkins 2001: 16.

<sup>135</sup> See: Akçam 2004: 22; Göçek 2011: 132; Kaplan 2006: 194-5.



might reveal that the supposed enemies and threats to the Turkish nation are, to a significant degree, constructed by the state.

In addition, significantly changing the official narrative could threaten the legitimacy of state officials and institutions in several ways. *First*, acknowledging that Ottoman Armenians were deported and killed in an organized state policy could damage the legitimacy of the Turkish state and the Turkish military, the predecessors of which were involved in the organization of the genocide and in the massacres, and which are the main institutional continuations of the regime that was in power at the time of the genocide.<sup>136</sup> *Second*, because state institutions have been actively involved in denying a range of facts related to the events of the Armenian Genocide, change therein could undermine public trust in those institutions by revealing that officials have been lying to Turkish citizens for decades, which could lead citizens to question the honesty and intentions of state actors on other issues (Bobelian 2009: 229). *Third*, in so much as the creation of enemies by the military and state officials has allowed them to limit civil liberties and Turkey's democratic advancement over the course of the second half of the twentieth century (Keyder 1997: 45-46), drastic changes in the narrative of the Armenian question could raise further questions about how the state, and especially the Turkish military, has *limited* rather than protected Turkey's democracy (Akçam 2004: 11-38).<sup>137</sup> And *finally*, the Turkish public has been primed to believe that Armenians covet Turkish territory, and that, behind their 'allegations' and 'claims' lurks a threat to Turkish lands. As example of this is in the June 1987 speech quoted from above, in which the Turkish President Kenan Evren warned:

"They [i.e., the Armenians] are after something else. ... There will be more demands after that [i.e., after the passage of resolutions recognizing their claims]. I will tell you what sort of demands: They will say there used to be an Armenia in eastern Turkey at one time in history, so give those lands to the Armenians now. The resolution was the first step and the demand will be the second step. If they are strong enough, if they are powerful enough, let them try! ... If they are strong enough now [i.e., in contrast to during the war of independence], let them come and try: They will receive their answer!" (Ankara Domestic Service 1987c).

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<sup>136</sup> On this last point, Göçek notes that "the only institution that managed to survive the transition from empire to the new nation-state almost entirely intact was the military which then formed, with the help of the state bureaucratic administration, the backbone of the new republic" (2011: 22). Moreover, despite official claims of a hard 'break' with the Ottoman and CUP past, scholars have identified strong continuities between CUP personnel and early Republican elites and personnel. For example, Göçek writes that: "once the Turkish Republic was established, not only were many of the members of its First National Assembly former members of the CUP, but so were many members of the Turkish military and of the central and provincial administrative bureaucracy. Even though the top-level leaders had escaped and the CUP had been formally abolished, the influence of the Young Turks thus persisted into the Turkish Republic through middle- and low-ranking members" (2011: 64). For an important book on this topic, see: Zürcher 1984.

<sup>137</sup> For instance, Fatma Müge Göçek argues that "the Turkish Republican elite in general and the Turkish military in particular initially generated the elements of the Sèvres syndrome for purposes of nation-state formation and then reproduced it as a paradigm to sustain their political power and control over the social and economic resources of the state" (2011: 99). This so-called Sèvres syndrome comprises most of the elements of the founding narrative that are outlined above. As a result, extending Göçek's argument, the undermining of the veracity of these themes would reveal that the founding narrative (and thus, the claims that have generated this so-called Sèvres syndrome) have come to legitimate the maintenance of power by certain elites and institutions in Turkey.

Importantly, this claim appears to be believed and feared by the Turkish public.<sup>138</sup> Thus, given the sacred unity of the Turkish territory in the identity of the Turkish nation, significant steps by state actors toward acknowledgement could be perceived as threatening to that unity, and therefore as unpatriotic or even traitorous, calling into question the legitimacy of those state actors in the eyes of a significant portion of the public.

Thus, reflecting the material and ideational consequences that might follow from a significant change in the content of Turkey's narrative, a *widening* set of state institutions – including a number of ministries, the national archives, the quasi-official historical society, the Parliament, the military and national officials – has been involved in articulating and defending the official narrative over the past several decades. This, in turn, is a significant explanation for the high degree of continuity in the Turkish narrative, especially when compared with the relatively lesser degree of continuity in, and lower level of involvement of state actors in the production of, Japan's official narrative.

### *The influence of societal actors*

These chapters also demonstrate how societal actors have both challenged and supported the official narrative over the past several decades.

The most prominent role played by societal actors has been in support of the official narrative, although many of the societal actors who reinforce and support the official narrative are not completely independent of the state.<sup>139</sup> The foremost supporters of the official narrative have been retired Turkish diplomats, a number of whom have been important contributors to public discourse about and politics related to the Armenian question. In addition, academics at a number of universities have published work on the Armenian question, some with the direct support of the Turkish Historical Society (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*, TTK),<sup>140</sup> and others with the encouragement of the Council of Higher Education (*Yükseköğretim Kurulu*, YÖK). Researchers in a handful of think tanks, many of which have connections to or are supported by the government, have also published books and other works that are consistent with the official narrative.

More problematically, nationalist activists and lawyers have publicly criticized and questioned the patriotism of societal actors who challenge the official narrative, and have brought a number

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<sup>138</sup> For example, in the Turkish village in which he conducted research, Kaplan found that “a visceral fear of Armenians returning...and reclaiming their lands still gripped local imagination. To prevent such a possibility, townspeople had leveled Armenian homes to their foundations and uprooted the orchards....Fear of the Armenians’ imminent return was equally present in the geography lesson I attended. At some point in the discussion about external enemies, some pupils wondered aloud whether I had come to spy on behalf of Armenian descendants or to unearth hidden treasures they may have left behind” (2006: 202).

<sup>139</sup> The Turkish state has long employed a strategy of drawing on societal groups and actors to help support the realization of state priorities. Göçek writes that the recently “published diaries of the former commander of the Turkish Navy” provide “details on how the Turkish military actively penetrates the public sphere to control the populace. In this endeavor, military generals regard the presidents of universities and workers’ unions as their natural allies. They also establish or infiltrate NGO’s that are supposed to operate independently of the state” (2011: 176).

<sup>140</sup> The Turkish Historical Society was established by Atatürk in 1931 to create a glorified national history for Turkey and Turks (Göçek 2007b). While it is nominally an independent foundation, TTK publications frequently reproduce and advance official ideologies on a range of topics, including the Armenian question.

of criminal charges against such critics of the official narrative. Moreover, prominent critics of the official narrative (in Turkey and abroad) have reported receiving death threats, and some have left Turkey or hired bodyguards in response, which indicates the seriousness of such threats. Reflecting the reality of these threats, Hrant Dink, the Turkish-Armenian journalist and editor-in-chief of the Istanbul-based Turkish-Armenian paper *Agos*, was assassinated in January 2007 for his activities related to and statements about the Armenian question. And internationally, Turkish groups in other countries – most notably, the United States and Germany – have organized to bring attention to key elements of the official narrative, both among Turks living abroad and among the wider communities in which they live.

More generally, the Turkish media has largely supported and replicated the central themes in the official narrative (Bayraktar 2010). And a number of writers have published books that support aspects of the official narrative, especially in the past ten years. Finally, among the broader population, regular citizens and low-level officials have contributed to the maintenance of the official narrative by upholding their ‘duty’ to preserve the ‘unity’ of the nation by remaining attentive to threats to the state and nation on this topic.<sup>141</sup> Collectively, this range of societal activities has bolstered the narrative by developing new research and arguments and by communicating and disseminating elements of the official narrative, reinforced politicians’ commitment to the official narrative by forming constituencies who believe in and mobilize politically in support of the official narrative, and helped to undercut challenges to the official narrative by sanctioning and threatening potential and real critics.

On the other side, however, societal actors who challenge aspects of the official narrative have also emerged over the past two decades. Since the early 1990s, a small but growing number of societal actors have challenged aspects of the official narrative. These critical actors have

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<sup>141</sup> A couple of anecdotes illustrate this point. At the end of one of my research visits, I went to a local post office in Ankara to send two boxes of books that I had accumulated home to California, because they would have been too heavy and bulky to transport in my suitcases. The majority of the books had been given to me by the director the state archives, and were books that had been published by the state archives on the Armenian question. The postal clerk at the post office insisted on inspecting the contents of my boxes. When he saw that the first book was one that had just recently been published on the Armenian question, on the cover of which was a photo of a gun (Bardakçı 2008), he was immediately suspicious. He then insisted on pulling each book out of the two boxes, flipping through each book (as if I had hidden something inside), and then ‘repacking’ the books into two new boxes. He wouldn’t let me touch the books while he went through this process. Finally, I wrote out the mailing slips and paid for the two boxes to be sent to California, for which I paid over \$200. I was slightly concerned that my books might not arrive, since this postal clerk seemed so suspicious, but I decided that this was likely just my own paranoia. Unfortunately, my concern was appropriate. A month later, only one box arrived in California. While this box had one of the mailing slips that I had completed affixed to its outside, this mailing slip had been *cut off* of the top of the box on which it had been attached and taped onto a new box, which was much larger than either of the ones in which my books had been repackaged. To my further surprise, inside this box were packages of Chinese tea and a book in Chinese. This was the only box that I received, and I did not receive any of the books that I had sent to myself, the majority of which *had been given to me by a Turkish state official*. My guess is that this postal worker had believed that, as a foreigner, I could only be intending to do something subversive with books on this very sensitive subject, and that it was his duty to prevent this. In addition to this experience, a Turkish historian told me that once when he was doing research in an archive in Turkey, he had requested some Ottoman documents related to the Armenian question. Upon realizing what the documents were about, the clerk in the archive had asked this historian if he should be looking at such sensitive materials. The historian replied that he was a trained historian, that historians were exactly who should be looking at such documents, and that only after doing so could one determine the nature of a document. In this case, he was given the requested documents.

included: activists in human rights organizations, academics in Turkey (and abroad), several publishing houses, and a growing number of journalists. Over time, this alternative discourse has gradually broken the taboo on the Armenian question and generated a growing domestic discussion about the topic. Importantly, this burgeoning discourse has made some Turks aware that they know little if anything about what happened to Armenians (and others) during World War I and its aftermath, and has prompted more Turks to want to find out more about how the nation's and/or their own families' pasts intersect with the fate of Ottoman Armenians during WWI. Moreover, recent changes in the content of the Turkish narrative have partially aimed at domestic audiences, who are increasingly exposed to the counter-narratives that have been produced and disseminated within the domestic sphere. Thus, recent official efforts have been directed to inculcating the official narrative in Turkish students, and the content of recent changes in the official narrative reflects official attempts to respond to the growing domestic attention to the Armenian question and the limited (but growing) questioning of the official narrative.

Finally, I trace other, indirect effects of civil society activism in the past ten years. Most notably, as external actors – particularly the European Union – pay increasing attention to minority, civil and human rights in Turkey, and as such actors regularly weigh in on such domestic political issues in Turkey, societal actors have been able to leverage their influence to put pressure on aspects of the official narrative, particularly by publicizing issues and attempting to hold the government accountable for commitments it makes to international actors. In this way, official actors are somewhat constrained in what they can say and do to defend the official narrative, because there is a likelihood that domestic groups who pay attention to this issue will be able to draw domestic *and* international attention to the government's actions.

### *Tracing feedback effects*

These chapters also show how the production of the official narrative has led to feedback effects that influence and shape the production of the narrative at later points in time.

In particular, ideational and material feedback effects on *official actors* have strongly reinforced continuities in the official narrative. As state actors and institutions have been involved in articulating and defending the official narrative, many have become more committed to it and have become key sources of continuity, both from within the state and later as 'societal' actors. Moreover, these chapters highlight the stickiness of the strategies that state actors have developed to defend the official narrative, and of the content of the official narrative. Over several decades and in response to different challenges to the official narrative, state actors have learned, replicated and even expanded on successful strategies; and have identified, perpetuated and sometimes adapted key themes in the content of the narrative.

In addition, a variety of direct and indirect feedback effects via *societal actors* have further reinforced continuities in the official narrative. Government policies and the interventions of state officials have long discouraged societal actors from getting involved in researching or contesting the official narrative of the Armenian question. These policies particularly affected academics, journalists and claims-making in public, especially through laws against and prosecutions of public declarations that dissented from the official narrative. As a result of these

policies, which were both explicit and implicit, there was little public discussion about the Armenian question, and no domestic criticism of the official narrative until the early 1990s.

In addition to actively discouraging criticism and public discussion of the Armenian question, state actors' efforts to defend and articulate the official narrative have engendered a set of actors and institutions within Turkish society that strongly support the official narrative. In the early 1980s, Turkish officials took a number of steps to defend the official narrative of the Armenian Genocide from mounting international pressure, and to disseminate the state's official narrative both domestically and internationally. As part of these efforts, the Turkish government worked with and through non-governmental groups to produce work on this issue that supported the official narrative. More recently, in response to intensified international pressure, Turkish officials' efforts to recalibrate and disseminate their narrative have again involved the creation of and collaboration with several think tanks. As a result, many of these societal actors have become important voices of support for the state's official narrative, and have produced evidence and arguments that support the official narrative. Importantly, however, a number of these seemingly independent actors have ties to the government, especially to the MFA and the military. In some cases, the degree of state involvement has been such that it is more appropriate to use the term 'government-sponsored non-governmental organization' (GONGO) (Naím 2007), although it is often difficult to assess whether a given organization merely has close ties with the state or is a state-sponsored agency that only looks like a civil society organization.

Ideationally, the initial silencing of and subsequent wide dissemination of the official narrative within Turkish society, especially through textbooks and other education programs at the secondary and tertiary levels, has meant that the official narrative of the Armenian question is all that Turkish citizens learned (until relatively recently.) This has fed the widespread tacit support for the official narrative within Turkish society,<sup>142</sup> and has also meant that Turkish human rights groups and activists were largely unaware of the Armenian question and did not consider speaking out about it until the mid-1990s.

In addition, the official framing of the Armenian question in terms of national identity and national unity has led to its embrace by nationalist politicians and ultranationalist groups. As a result, the growing critical discourse that began to flourish in the late-1990s and early 2000s elicited a virulent (and at times violent) nationalist backlash, involving state actors, politicians and civil society actors, many of whom are suspected to have connections to the military and other state organs. Particularly after 2005, these nationalist responses began to constrain debate within Turkey on this issue, and to constrain the Turkish government's ability to shift its position on this issue.

Finally, the *back and forth among societal groups* that is so marked in the Japanese case is also evident in the Turkish case. Since the late 1990s/early 2000s, Turkish intellectuals and journalists have sparred with each other over the interpretation of the events of 1915, with the sociologist Mehmet Nefci (2003) identifying four distinct views among participants in such

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<sup>142</sup> On this point, Nefci quotes the historian Taner Akçam in making the point that "one of the most important hindrances for a rational debate on the massacre [of Ottoman Armenians] is ... 'the loss of remembrance which characterizes Turkish society', which manifests itself as 'the non-existence of a historical consciousness'" (2003: 241, quoting from Akçam 2000: 144-62).

debates. Moreover, societal actors within Turkey have engaged in debate over this issue in response to the actions of others within Turkey, as well as in reaction to international pressure.<sup>143</sup>

### ***Research conducted***

My analysis is based on interviews and research conducted in Istanbul and Ankara between June 2007 and April 2009. In Turkey, I gathered books and articles published by government agencies, high school history textbooks, educational curricular announcements, and newspaper articles reporting on the ‘Armenian question.’<sup>144</sup> In addition, I have analyzed newspaper articles and other texts, and relevant secondary sources.<sup>145</sup>

In the spring of 2008 and the spring of 2009, I interviewed a range of elites, including: journalists, academics, retired Turkish officials (especially diplomats), foreign diplomats, high-level bureaucrats, publishers, activists, researchers in think tanks (from across the political spectrum) and others. For my interviews, I sought to speak with individuals who have been involved in the politics related to the Armenian question, Turkish-Armenian relations, Armenian affairs (in Turkey) and/or minority, civil or human rights issues in Turkey. I asked questions about political events and policies related to the Armenian question that intersected with interviewees’ own experiences and/or in which interviewees had been involved. In particular, I focused on identifying when and why particular policy decisions were made, and assessing the impact of foreign pressures and domestic activism on the actions of societal and official actors in Turkey.<sup>146</sup>

I have analyzed the content of two series of high school history textbooks: High School History III (*Tarih Lise III*) textbooks published between 1951 and 1990, and The History of the Revolution of the Turkish Republic and Atatürkism (*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılâp Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük*) textbooks published between 1981 and 2007.<sup>147</sup> The processes of writing curricula, approving textbooks, and selecting and training teachers are all centralized at the national level, under the auspices of the Ministry of National Education and the powerful Instruction and Education Board (*Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu*) (World Bank 2005: 9; Kaya 2009: 9).<sup>148</sup> Moreover,

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<sup>143</sup> Necef also argues that Turkish and Armenian groups in other countries have engaged each other in contesting this issue, and implies that contestation and attention to the issue escalated most in those places where both groups live (2003: 244-5).

<sup>144</sup> I should note that I have not yet been able to analyze all of the materials that I gathered.

<sup>145</sup> I have also interviewed a handful of people in the United States who have been involved with this issue.

<sup>146</sup> The vast majority of individuals with whom I spoke have written about, spoken about or somehow been involved in this issue in Turkey. I did not ask for interviewees’ own views of the events themselves, since the point of my interviews was not to assess actors’ personal views, but to identify and understand the range of policy steps that have been taken on this issue, and to get an accurate sense of the development, scope and impact of societal activities on this issue. The interviews were conducted either in English or in Turkish, depending on the interviewee’s fluency in English and preference.

<sup>147</sup> The High School History III course was used (until the late 1990s) in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and covered Ottoman and European political and social history from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, generally stopping at World War II. The History of the Revolution of the Turkish Republic and Atatürkism textbook addresses more contemporary political history and is used in 11<sup>th</sup> Grade. It covers the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, focusing particularly on the creation of the Republic of Turkey and Atatürk’s role in this process.

<sup>148</sup> The only part of the process that is not completely handled by the government is the actual writing of textbooks, some of which are written by the Ministry and others of which are written by private textbook publishers (Çayır 2009: 45). But, the content and goals of textbook curricula are specified by the Instruction and Education Board in

education has been a crucial arena in which officials have communicated the state's position on the Armenian question to generations of Turkish children. As a result, the content in these textbooks reflects the official narrative quite accurately.<sup>149</sup>

I also compiled a comprehensive list of books that have been published on the Armenian question in Turkey between 1950 and 2009.<sup>150</sup> I put this list together by searching the online catalogues of the Turkish Historical Society and the Turkish Parliament; referring to bibliographies on the Armenian question that are available on the websites of the Prime Minister's Office, the Office of the President, the state archives (which includes the Republican and Ottoman archives), the military archives, the Turkish Armed Forces, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Institute for Armenian Research; analyzing bibliographies that have been published on the topic;<sup>151</sup> and consulting the bibliographies of several books published by the Turkish Historical Society. While it is likely that I have missed a few publications, I am confident that this list is sufficiently comprehensive to allow me to accurately track trends in publications over time.

Finally, I have gathered and analyzed hundreds of newspaper articles capturing official speeches, statements and actions related to this narrative, from which I have identified the themes that were emphasized in the official narrative in each phase.<sup>152</sup> First, I searched the online database Factiva for news articles about the Armenian question. From the thousands of articles that were returned from this search, I downloaded and more carefully analyzed about 300 articles, the majority of which were from the 1990s.<sup>153</sup> Second, I searched the online database ProQuest Historical Newspapers for letters to the editor and articles that have been published in American newspapers by Turkish officials and Turkish-American organizations.<sup>154</sup> Together, these searches returned about 230 results, 151 of which I have analyzed. The analyzed texts include 19

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such detail that there is little variation between textbooks by different authors (Altınay 2005: 90; Soysal and Antoniou 2002: 57).

<sup>149</sup> All translations of textbooks are my own, although I had a native Turkish-speaking friend double-check my translations, for which I am grateful.

<sup>150</sup> Since I have not yet updated this data to include the last two years of the latest 5-year period (2006-2010), charts based on this data only show trends through the last complete period (2001-2005).

<sup>151</sup> Vassilian 1992; İltis 1997; Hovannisian 1978.

<sup>152</sup> I should note that, when I indicate that a theme is one of the most commonly argued points in a given phase, this should be understood in a relative, not an absolute sense. In other words, a statement that a particular theme is one of the most common in a phase should be understood to mean that it appears most frequently *among* the range of themes that I have identified in the set of documents that I have collected and analyzed.

<sup>153</sup> For this search, I used the search terms "Turkey" AND "Armenian genocide OR Armenian question OR Armenian problem". This search returned several thousand results that had been published between June 1978 and May 2000. I skimmed these results to identify relevant and useful articles. A little over 25% of the articles that I analyzed were from the 1970s and 1980s, while the rest were from the 1990s.

<sup>154</sup> I searched for articles in four databases within the ProQuest database: the New York Times (1851-2006), the Los Angeles Times (1881-1993), the Washington Post (1988-1993), and the Wall Street Journal (1889-1992). In particular, I narrowed my search to document types "editorial\_article" and "letter (to editor)" that had been published between 1/1/1950 and 2/11/2010. I searched for pieces by the Turkish Prime Minister and President, and by the Turkish Ambassador, Press Attache, Press Counselor and Information Counselor in the US Embassy or regional consular offices. I also conducted searches using the specific names of the individuals who have served as Turkish Foreign Minister, Ambassador to the US, President and Press Counselor between 1950 and 2010. In addition, I conducted further searches for "Turkey OR Turkish" AND "Armenia OR Armenian" in the field *citation and document text*.

articles on the Armenian question that were written by Turkish officials between 1957 and 2007. Finally, I searched the online database Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) for statements by Turkish officials about the Armenian question.<sup>155</sup> I reviewed the 446 results returned, and downloaded and analyzed 68 articles published between 1980 and 1993, the majority of which were or included statements, speeches and interviews by Turkish officials, particularly those holding the office of President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Ambassador.<sup>156</sup>

Drawing on this variety of sources, I have developed a detailed timeline of the official Turkish narrative of the Armenian Genocide over the past sixty years, traced changes in the content of and strategies used to support the official narrative, and identified the factors that have shaped changes and continuities in the narrative.

### ***Historical background***

The Armenian Genocide took place between 1915 and 1917, when the vast majority of the Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire were forcibly deported from their homes to inhospitable locations in the Syrian desert and elsewhere within the territory of the Ottoman Empire. The deportation (*tehcir*) was ordered and organized by the Committee of Union and Progress,<sup>157</sup> which governed the Ottoman Empire at the time, and occurred within the broader context of the widespread ethnic cleansing and mass killing of Christian minorities living within the empire during WWI.<sup>158</sup>

The genocide began in February 1915 and continued until about mid-1917, although different scholars give different dates for the ‘end’ of the genocide, as it was a process that bled into later events.<sup>159</sup> The initial deportations of Ottoman Armenians began in select areas in February 1915.<sup>160</sup> Then, on 24 April 1915 and continuing for several days, intellectuals, community leaders and other prominent Armenians were arrested in Istanbul and in other cities by the Ottoman authorities. Within a few days, between 1,000 and 2,000 Armenian elites had been arrested, and few survived.<sup>161</sup> A month later, in late May 1915, the “deportation decision” was

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<sup>155</sup> I conducted searches in 6 “publication series”: *Daily Report Central Eurasia*, *Daily Report Middle East & Africa*, *Daily Report Middle East & North Africa*, *Daily Report West Europe*, *Daily Report Western Europe*, and *FBIS Report Central Asia*; for article types: text, excerpts, speeches and interviews; for the country/political entity Turkey. The search terms that I used were: “Turkey OR Turkish” AND “Armenian” AND near10 “massacre OR genocide OR claims.” This returned 446 results published between 1975 and 1996, the majority of which were translations of articles published in the Turkish press and speeches made before Turkish audiences.

<sup>156</sup> One limitation of the FBIS articles is that they are (for the most part) translations from Turkish to English. As a result, I cannot check the accuracy of the translations or verify the original Turkish for particular words or phrases. That said, I have mainly analyzed these articles in order to identify themes emphasized by Turkish officials. Given that this was my main purpose in analyzing the FBIS articles, I do not think that my analysis has been significantly compromised by the loss of information inherent in using translated version of speeches.

<sup>157</sup> The leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress were a radical clique within a larger reformist movement referred to as the ‘Young Turks.’

<sup>158</sup> Üngör 2008; Bjørnlund 2008; Schaller and Zimmerer 2008 and 2009; Gaunt 2006.

<sup>159</sup> All scholars agree that the genocide began in early 1915, but end-dates vary between 1916, 1917 and 1918. Most scholars place the end of the genocide either in 1917 or in 1918.

<sup>160</sup> Dündar 2011: 281; Üngör 2011a: 297; Mann 2005: 145.

<sup>161</sup> April 24<sup>th</sup> is the date on which the Armenian Genocide is annually commemorated. For more on these arrests, see: Dadrian 1995: 221; Akçam 2006: 160; Mann 2005: 148; Göçek 2011: 276; Ülgen 2010: 255.



officially announced as a temporary law,<sup>162</sup> and by late June 1915, the deportation order was expanded to include *all* Armenians in the Empire (Ulgen 2010: 235). And while the deportations and massacres continued until June 1917 (Ulgen 2010: 244), Mann writes that “by early September [1915] there were no Armenian communities left, except in the big and visible cities of Constantinople, Smyrna, and Aleppo” (2005: 149).

While the genocide occurred within the broad context of this deportation, there were a number of different ways in which the processes of violence unfolded. Many men were conscripted into unarmed labor battalions instead of into fighting units in the Ottoman army, and after some period of time, most were massacred.<sup>163</sup> Men who had not been conscripted and boys above the age of about 12 were typically taken and killed before the rest of the population of a town or village was deported. Thus, most of the people who were deported were women, children and the elderly (Mann 2005: 151). “In many regions,” Kévorkian writes, “some or all of the deportees were liquidated in slaughterhouse sites near their point of departure” (2011: 629). Many others died in the course of the deportation in attacks by groups of Kurds, local villagers and groups organized by the Special Organization (see below); in violence by the gendarmes leading the deportees; and from starvation, disease and sickness. In addition, many of the prettiest girls and young women were raped and taken from the deportation marches to serve as servants, wives or mistresses by officers, Kurds and others who encountered the deportees. In this way, thousands of women and girls were separated from their families and forced to live with Muslim men and families. Most of these women were required to follow Islamic religious practices and their names were often changed from Armenian to Turkish ones, signaling the forcible erasure of their Armenian identities.<sup>164</sup> Moreover, while thousands of Armenians survived the deportation marches, most of which terminated in the Syrian desert, these survivors then suffered starvation, exposure to the elements and further organized massacres. On the last point, Ulgen (2010: 234-5) notes that “the greatest massacres occurred in the camps of Der Zor. ... [The historian Raymond] Kevorkian argues [that] 200,000 Armenians were murdered in these camps by Circassians, Chechens, and Arabs.”<sup>165</sup>

In addition to the physical violence of the genocide, the wealth, properties, businesses and homes of Armenians were ‘confiscated’ by the state, carefully counted and redistributed to hundreds of thousands of Muslim refugees and internal Muslim groups that were resettled in the regions, towns, homes and businesses that had been ‘vacated’ by Armenians. This massive redistribution of wealth and resources significantly enriched the state and advanced the nascent project of forging a more homogeneous population, and formed the physical infrastructural and economic basis for the creation of a new class of Muslim entrepreneurs and artisans (Keyder 1997: 40; Ulgen 2010: 8).<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Halaçoğlu 2002: 74-5; Ulgen 2010: 231; Dadrian 1995: 221-2.

<sup>163</sup> Mann writes that “it is ... unclear when the Armenian army labor battalions began to be killed, though this was under way at the end of May [1915]. By July almost 200,000 Armenian soldiers had been killed” (2005: 148).

<sup>164</sup> Ulgen writes that “there is no documentation of Armenian conversions and the transfer of Armenian women and children to ... Muslim households during the Great War. There is no question that their figures are in the thousands” (2010: 193). For a discussion of the particular fate of women and children in the genocide, see: Miller and Miller 1992. On efforts to locate and rescue captive women and children and orphans in the postwar period, see: Watenpaugh 2010; Shemmassian 2003.

<sup>165</sup> See also: Bloxham 2003a: 36-7; Mann 2005: 152.

<sup>166</sup> On this, see: Üngör 2011b; Polatel and Üngör 2011; Ulgen 2010: 245-55; Dündar 2011: 282.

As a result of all of this, an estimated 800,000-1.5 million Armenians were killed over the course of, and under the cover of, this forced deportation. The sociologist Michael Mann estimates that “perhaps two-thirds of the Armenians died altogether” (2005: 140). Moreover, as a consequence of the deportations and massacres, the Armenian minority community that had lived for centuries in Anatolia – in what is now the territory of the Republic of Turkey – was eliminated. Göçek reports that: “the Armenians had comprised about 20 per cent of the total population of the Ottoman Empire. They were reduced to about 5 per cent of the population at the advent of the Turkish Republic [i.e., in 1923]” (2011: 151).<sup>167</sup> And sketching a picture of the broader scope of the ethnic cleansing and destruction that took place within the Ottoman Empire in this period, Ulgen notes that, “at the end of the Great War, nine-tenths of the Christian population, which was around one-sixth of the total population in Anatolia, was cleansed through forced expulsion, massacre and population exchange” (2010: 160).

The organizers of the deportations, massacres, confiscations and resettlements were a small group of radical nationalists at the highest levels of the ruling Committee of Union and Progress, particularly the Interior Minister Talât (later: Paşa), the other two leaders of the ruling CUP ‘triumvirate,’ Enver Paşa and Cemal Paşa, and members of the Central Committee of the CUP (Akçam 2004: 168-70). Led by Talât (Paşa), bureaucrats in the Ottoman Interior Ministry planned and orchestrated the details of the deportation, the confiscation of Armenians’ wealth and belongings, and the internal resettlement of Muslim refugees and others.<sup>168</sup> The details of the deportations were implemented by local bureaucratic and CUP party officials (Akçam 2004: 171), and by the Special Organization (*Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa*), which “was in effect a secret service directly responsible to Enver and paid out of secret War Ministry funds” (Ulgen 2010: 188). The deportation marches were led by police and gendarmes, while many of the attacks on and massacres of deportees were organized by the Special Organization, and carried out by the officers and “irregular forces” of the Special Organization.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Moreover, “by the first Republican population census in 1927, their total had been reduced to 123,602 – about 0.9 per cent of the total population of Turkey” (Göçek 2011: 211).

<sup>168</sup> Within the Interior Ministry, an agency called the Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants (IAMM) coordinated the resettlement of Muslim refugees from the Balkans, gathered information on various ethnic and religious groups and their distribution throughout the empire, and was involved in the deportation of Armenians. On IAMM, see: Ulgen 2010: 219; Dündar 2008; Mann 2005: 157.

<sup>169</sup> See: Mann 2005: 163; Dadrian 1995: 237-9; Akçam 2004: 159-64. Mann writes that “the main killers ... were the 20,000-30,000 men of the paramilitary forces organized by the Teskilat-I Mahsusa (the Special Organization). ... in 1913 or early 1914, ... they were put under the command of the Directorate for Public Security, a secretive organization within the Interior Ministry, but staffed only by CUP members with its own budget. ... The Special Forces recruited mainly ex-army officers plus a few civilian adventurers. They were almost all Turks. The higher-ranking officers were Ittihadists, but the organization also recruited many lured by simple patriotism or a desire for adventure and speedy meritocratic advancements... . The Special Forces may have committed most of the murders of Armenians” (2005: 164-5). He further writes that “the rank-and-file were different. Some were uniformed gendarmes, but since most regular gendarmes had been conscripted into the army, the gendarmerie had been forced to draft many raw recruits unsuitable for military service. They were reinforced by two types of irregular unit referred to by all as brigands (*cetes*). One was composed of criminals. ... The second type of brigand and unit was tribal, led by Kurdish, Chechen, and Circassian chiefs. ... Kurdish tribes dominated massacres in several eastern regions, Chechens in parts of the south, Circassians in both. These tribal groups rarely helped plan the deportations, but they repeatedly attacked and massacred isolated Armenian villages and refugee columns” (2005: 166).

Finally, there were a variety of factors that led to the genocide, among which the key causes included:

1. The psychological and real impact on CUP leaders (and Ottoman Turks) of the territorial losses from,<sup>170</sup> massacres of Muslims in, and Muslim refugees from the Balkan Wars;<sup>171</sup>
2. The fear among CUP leaders of Armenian claims on Anatolian territory, especially resulting from the Great Power states' backing of Armenians' demands for greater self-determination and more equal rights in the prior decades;
3. The fear among CUP leaders that Armenians would rise up en masse against the Ottoman state and collaborate with the Russians;
4. The growing conflict between Kurds and Armenians over control of land in Anatolia, resulting from the state's attempt to settle nomadic tribes of Kurds in areas that were already inhabited by Armenians (Ulgen 2010: 159; Mann 2005: 116);
5. The radical, ethnonationalist views of those within the central governing committee in the CUP, and their incompatibility with the goals and existence of Armenian nationalists; and
6. The fact that the Ottoman Empire was embroiled in the broader context of World War I, which provided a cover for the CUP's activities, and also heightened extant fears and paranoia.

#### *Disputed elements of this history*

While the section above outlines the generally agreed-upon contours of knowledge about the genocide, there are several issues on which there is less agreement among scholars. In the next few paragraphs I briefly outline the issues that are still being debated, particularly among scholars who would generally agree with the description above. I also address key discrepancies in the official Turkish narrative, since many of the points above are not found in the Turkish government's narrative of the 'events of 1915.'

For a variety of reasons, it is difficult to precisely estimate the death toll in the genocide. As a result, scholars offer varying estimates of the number of Armenians that were killed or died in the deportation and in the other processes described above. Most scholars offer estimates ranging between 600,000 and about 1.5 million deaths. In contrast, if it is mentioned at all, the official Turkish narrative offers much lower estimates of the death toll, from a low of about 55,000 (Halaçoğlu 2002) up to several hundred thousand.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Göçek strikingly highlights the extremity of the Empire's territorial losses in the last few decades of its existence. She writes that "up until the Balkan Wars of 1912, the empire could not prevent the loss of 60 per cent of its lands to either the West or Russia. Half of the Ottoman Empire that had been painstakingly built over six centuries was lost literally within less than a century" (2011: 112 – emphasis in original). Moreover, between 1912 and 1918, "the Young Turks not only failed to regain the previous 60 per cent land loss but actually managed to lose another 35 per cent of the imperial lands they had been entrusted to govern" (*Ibid.*: 113 – emphasis in original).

<sup>171</sup> On these points, see, e.g.: Mann 2005: 113; Üngör 2011: 293; Ulgen 2010: 201-2, 212-3; Göçek 2011: 18, 114-5.

<sup>172</sup> For discussions of this issue and a higher assessment of the death toll, see: Bloxham 2005: 10; Dadrian 1992; Hovannisian 1999a: 217-219; Bloxham 2003a: 36-37. For arguments in support of (in some cases, much) lower estimates, see: McCarthy 1983; McCarthy 1995; Lewy 2005; Sonyel 1972; Sonyel 2001; Halaçoğlu 2002; Gürün 1985: 217.

Beyond this question of numbers, some scholars argue that the genocide was planned in advance,<sup>173</sup> while others have concluded that the state's actions gradually progressed toward genocide (Bloxham 2003b; Mann 2005: 140).<sup>174</sup> Moreover, among those who argue that the genocide was planned in advance, there is disagreement over the date on which they argue that the decision was made. Regardless of these differences, however, these scholars agree that there was a consistent pattern to the deportations, massacres and confiscations; that the events resulted in genocide; and that there is evidence of the planning behind this pattern in foreign archives, diplomatic correspondence and in Ottoman and Turkish archives.

In contrast, the official Turkish narrative maintains that this was not a case of genocide. Recently, this argument has been grounded in the argument that there is no evidence of the intent to destroy Armenians 'in whole or in part,' as the UN Genocide Convention describes. This point is addressed in the paragraph above. In addition, in contrast to arguments sometimes made in the official narrative, the vast majority of Armenians living in the empire were deported and/or killed, not only those who were suspected of having allied with the Russians and/or organizing nationalist activities, and not only those who lived near the front lines of the war. And while there were some exceptions to the order to deport all Armenians – such as essential skilled craftsmen, some Catholic and Protestant (i.e., non-Gregorian/Orthodox Christian) Armenians (although only at first), and some Armenians in the cities of Istanbul, Smyrna (now Izmir) and Edirne (all of which were in or near Europe, and in which many more foreign diplomats and officers were present) – these were exceptions to an otherwise fairly comprehensive and systematically applied set of policies.

Finally, from the very beginning, the official Turkish narrative has emphasized that massacres of Muslims by Armenians precipitated the Ottoman state's actions, and that the deportation was a defensive response to an internal rebellion. Contrary to this contention, however, Armenian uprisings during the war and genocide were rare, and were primarily defensive reactions against repression and/or the deportation order.<sup>175</sup> There were two Armenian nationalist organizations that did have aspirations to Armenian independence, and there were some Ottoman Armenians that did join the Russian army at the beginning of World War I. That said, the nationalist groups were quite small in comparison to the rest of the Armenian population and did not represent the majority of Armenians. In addition, the numbers of Ottoman Armenians who were in the Ottoman army vastly outnumbered those that helped and fought with the Russians (Mann 2005: 136). Most importantly, the broader claim that Armenians massacred Turks is presented anachronistically and misleadingly in the official narrative. Thus, in 1918, some Armenians in the Russian-occupied areas of eastern Anatolia attacked Turkish villages and massacred innocent Turks (Naimark 2001: 39). Obviously, these massacres of innocent Turks were also wrong. That said, they differed qualitatively from the Ottoman state's organized deportation and massacres of Ottoman Armenians: On the one hand, these revenge killings were not organized by a state. And on the other hand, they were not intended to 'destroy in whole or in part' the population of Turks or Muslims. Moreover, the massacres occurred *after* the genocide, so cannot have been a cause of the deportation.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Akçam 2004: 166-7; Dadrian 1995; Melson 1992.

<sup>174</sup> Hovannisian's chapter in his latest edited volume on the genocide gives a good overview of this debate (2007a).

<sup>175</sup> See also: Bloxham 2003a: 42-43; Naimark 2001: 29-30; Mann 2005: 146, 149.

<sup>176</sup> See also: Ulgen 2010: 256; Bloxham 2005: 100.

Now that I have sketched the basic facts of the genocide, let me outline the establishment of an initial narrative in the decade after the genocide and the end of World War I.

### ***Establishing the official narrative in the wake of the genocide***

In May 1915, a few days before the temporary deportation law was announced, the Allied powers issued a joint public statement to the Ottoman Government about the rumored deportation and massacres of Ottoman Armenians. “The Allies proclaimed: ‘In view of this new crime of Turkey against humanity and civilization, the Allied Governments make known publicly to the Sublime Porte that they will hold all the members of the Turkish Government, as well as those officials who have participated in these massacres, personally responsible’” (Hovannisian 1978: xiii). In response to this official criticism and to extensive coverage of the deportation and suffering of Ottoman Armenians in Western newspapers such as *The New York Times* (Kloian 1985), the Ottoman government produced and disseminated several official defenses of the deportation during the war (Kaiser 2003: 3-4; Ulgen 2010: 367-8). In these publications, “the Ottoman government maintained there had been no plan or attempt to destroy the Ottoman Armenians, and thus all the Entente accusations were lies. It had been these powers which were responsible for instigating the Armenians to revolt: thus both the Entente and the Armenians shared the guilt for the Armenians’ fate” (Kaiser 2003: 4). In addition, the Ottoman government argued that the deportation was undertaken “‘to assure internal order and external security of the country,’” and that “‘during the application of these measures, regrettable acts of violence have sometimes been committed, but however regrettable these acts might have been, they were inevitable because of the profound indignation of the Moslem population’” (Hovannisian 1986: 141, quoting from Osmanlı Devleti 1916). As Guorian writes, “of special interest in this text is the representation of the deportations as a ‘necessity,’ the removal of the Armenians as ‘indispensable,’ and the violence done to the deportees as ‘inevitable’” (1986: 141).

Immediately after the end of the war, the Ottoman government was under internal and external pressure, especially from Britain, to punish the perpetrators of the Armenian massacres (Bobelian 2009: 52-8; Gürün 1985: 229-32). Unfortunately, the leaders of the CUP and a few key organizers of the genocide had fled the country immediately prior to the end of the war, making it impossible to punish those most responsible for the genocide.<sup>177</sup> Nevertheless, in response to this pressure, the government established a military tribunal to try individuals accused of organizing and executing the deportation and massacres of Ottoman Armenians, at the conclusion of which 17 individuals were sentenced to death, of whom three were later executed (Kramer 2006: 446).<sup>178</sup> In addition, from 1918-1919, there were internal investigations and debates over responsibility for the events within the Ottoman government, including a commission of investigation in the Ottoman parliament (Dadrian 1995: 319-336; Aktar 2007). In the Parliamentary debates, many non-Muslim minority members of the Parliament called for punishment of the officials who were involved in the deportations and massacres, and argued that the former CUP government should be held responsible for the massacres of Armenians and

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<sup>177</sup> Shortly before doing so, they reportedly destroyed many incriminating documents (Üngör 2011a: 300; Ulgen 2010: 369).

<sup>178</sup> On this tribunal, see: Bass 2000: 106-146; Dadrian and Akçam 2008; Kramer 2006; Dadrian 1997; Akçam 2004; Höss 1992.

Greeks during the war. However, in these same debates, some members of the Parliament (especially former CUP members) argued that Turks had also died during the war, some from attacks and massacres by Armenians, and argued that these Muslim deaths should also be punished and mentioned. These former CUP members also “took the position that ‘in the past, bad things happened; let’s not stir up these issues’” (Aktar 2007: 254). One deputy argued that while the Turkish side had massacred Armenians, “‘it was the Armenians who started it all,’” with the development of an Armenian nationalist movement, followed by Armenian rebellions against Turks, which resulted in the ‘mutual massacre,’ for which all guilty should be punished (Aktar 2007: 258). And in 1919, the Grand Vizier advanced similar arguments. According to Hovannisian’s summary: “Admitting that terrible crimes had been committed, he shifted the blame to the Germans and Young Turk dictators and reminded the Allies of Armenian excesses as well. Armenians and Turks had lived together peaceably for centuries, and there was no validity in the view that the Armenians were victims of innate Turkish racial or religious intolerance” (1986: 116).

As the War of Independence took shape, however, and as power shifted from the Ottoman government to the newly-declared nationalist government in Ankara,<sup>179</sup> official discussions and investigations of the issue abated. By late 1920, the leaders of the nationalist movement had turned away from the prosecution of perpetrators of the genocide and disavowed official responsibility for the events. There were three main reasons for this shift. *First*, allowing CUP leaders and Ottoman officials to be held responsible for the Armenian massacres would have threatened the nationalists’ goal of securing the Anatolian heartland for the Turkish nation.<sup>180</sup> There was a real fear – among the nationalist leaders, among new elites, and among the Anatolian population – that Armenians would return and would reclaim their properties, businesses and homes. Given that these confiscated properties and wealth had effected an immediate and fundamental transformation of both the economic landscape in Anatolia and of the Muslim community in the emergent ‘Turkish’ nation, a reversal of this ‘redistribution’ was to be avoided at all costs (Ulgen 2010). Moreover, that this fear was not unfounded was made clear in the (later supplanted) 1920 Peace Treaty of Sèvres, which acknowledged “massacres perpetrated in Turkey during the war,” provided for the trial and punishment of the perpetrators of these massacres and of “persons accused of having committed acts in violation of the laws and customs of war,” and stipulated that the (short-lived) state of Armenia might be entitled to part or all of the Ottoman provinces of Erzurum, Trabzon, Van and Bitlis.<sup>181</sup> *Second*, when arrests and trials of perpetrators of the genocide were initiated by both the British and the Ottoman government, many of the perpetrators of the genocide had fled to Anatolia and emerged as leaders of the growing national resistance movement. The leaders of the nationalist movement could not afford to lose their support, organizational skills and networks in Anatolia.<sup>182</sup> *Third*, the leaders of the resistance movement and the organizers of the genocide came from the same

<sup>179</sup> This shift in power from the Ottoman government to the nationalists, many of whom were former CUP officials, took place between 1919 and 1920.

<sup>180</sup> This was the nationalists’ central goal. See, e.g.: Gürün 1985: 246-7; Göçek 2011: 125.

<sup>181</sup> For the text of the treaty, from which these quotes are taken, see: [http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.236/current\\_category.49/affirmation\\_detail.html](http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.236/current_category.49/affirmation_detail.html). The term genocide had not yet been coined in 1920, so the events were not called as such in the Treaty of Sèvres. See also: Dadrian 1995: 305; Gürün 1985: 244-5.

<sup>182</sup> See: Kaiser 2003; Akçam 2004; Üngör 2011a: 305; Göçek 2006: 112.

pool of CUP leaders, making it highly unlikely that nationalist leaders would strongly condemn the deportation and massacres of Armenians during the war.<sup>183</sup>

Over the period between 1918 and 1920, as Ülgen shows, Atatürk's language and interpretation of the events of 1915 and of the broader Armenian question established many of the themes that are still evident in the official narrative (2010: 270-299).<sup>184</sup> In a speech in 1920, he described "this Armenian massacre forgery, which [...] consisted of nothing but lies....and so they poisoned the entire world against our devastated country and against our oppressed nation with this terrifying accusation" (*Ibid.*: 277). Moreover, Atatürk also referred to how Armenians were well-treated throughout the war, to Armenian "assaults and murders" of Muslims, and to European countries' scheming allegations against Turkey (*Ibid.*: 277); all of which emerged as elements of the official narrative in later phases. Finally, while Atatürk acknowledged "that some 'shameful act', some 'disaster' ... had indeed taken place," the central emphasis in his speech was on the injustice of British claims related to massacres of Armenians (*Ibid.*: 277-8). Several months later, Atatürk wrote in a letter that "the bloody conflicts ... of the Turkish and Armenian peoples provoked by either the Czarist regime or the Western imperialism have caused human losses for one side as much as it has for the other side" (*Ibid.*: 280). Thus, another theme that remains a key element in the official narrative – that there had been suffering and equal losses on both sides – was present. Likewise, in a speech to a domestic audience in December 1920, Atatürk stated that "whatever has ever happened to non-muslim minorities living in our country, it has been the result of their own policies of partition ... they have followed in a savage way ... having been carried away by the foreign intrigues and having exploited their capitulations" (*Ibid.*: 282). Finally, in an interview that Atatürk gave with a foreign reporter in early 1921, he referred to the deportation as "a decision that we had been forced to take" (*Ibid.*: 284). These statements explicitly raised another theme that later emerged in the official narrative, that the deportation was a necessary action to ensure the safety and security of Turks and Muslims.

Finally, the willingness of the international community to acquiesce to this new position was signaled in the fall of 1921, when Britain agreed to trade those who had been arrested for their suspected involvement in the genocide for British soldiers who had been captured by the leaders of the nationalist movement (Dadrian 1995: 311). This ended the official pursuit of justice for the perpetrators of the genocide.<sup>185</sup> Later, when the postwar peace settlement between Turkey and the Allied Powers was renegotiated in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, the representatives of the soon-to-be established Republic of Turkey<sup>186</sup> refused to discuss the question of an Armenian

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<sup>183</sup> The national resistance movement had been organized by the CUP prior to its dissolution and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire (Akçam 2006: 127-30; Zürcher 1984). Still, it is important to emphasize that not all of the leaders of the resistance movement had been involved in the genocide. A key example is Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), who was selected to lead the resistance movement by CUP leaders precisely *because* he had not been involved in the massacres and deportation (Ülgen 2010: 263).

<sup>184</sup> Ülgen (2010: 270-299) explains that Atatürk referred to the 'Armenian question' in numerous telegrams sent between 1918 and 1920, and in four published texts from 1920.

<sup>185</sup> That same year, the last moment of international attention to this issue came during the trial in Berlin of Soghomon Tehlirian for the assassination of Talât Paşa in broad daylight on a Berlin street on 15 March 1921. In June 1921, Tehlirian was acquitted, in a verdict that turned on German and international sympathy for Armenians. On the trial, see: Bobelian 2009: 62-4.

<sup>186</sup> The Republic of Turkey was proclaimed on 29 October 1923.

‘homeland’ (Gürün 1985: 290), and refused to allow any reference to the Armenian massacres (or even to Armenians) in the treaty document.<sup>187</sup> Consequently, the Treaty of Lausanne marks the silencing of this issue internationally (Bobelian 2009: 73; Hovannisian 1986: 119) as well as in official Turkish discourse.<sup>188</sup> This official silence grew out of the same fears and concerns that undergirded the nationalists’ denial of the events (discussed above.) Tellingly, one interviewee argued that after the Treaty of Lausanne, the Kemalist<sup>189</sup> leaders tried to leave the past behind to prevent questioning of the new regime, because if they had allowed discussion on this and other issues, it could have threatened the very existence of the new regime.<sup>190</sup>

This official silence continued for decades within Turkey, with no official notice of what had befallen Ottoman Armenians during WWI, and the gradual elision of documentary and physical evidence of the historical presence of Armenians (and other non-Turkish ethnic and religious groups) in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>191</sup> This silence was perpetuated by Turkey’s geostrategic position in the Cold War,<sup>192</sup> and by constraints on democratic freedoms and on the expression of minorities domestically (İçduygu, Toktaş & Soner 2008; Kurban 2004-05). Reflecting the tabooed nature of the issue, only a few books were published on the topic in the decades following the establishment of the Republic. Moreover, even in these first decades, Turkish authorities actively worked to prevent foreign books on the genocide from being circulated in Turkey. Üngör offers several telling examples, concluding that “for the regime it did not matter much that Armenians wrote and circulated memoirs among themselves – as long as memory was produced and consumed within an Armenian milieu and did not trickle back into Turkey” (2011d: 17). In addition, Jørgensen (2003: 200-1) notes the absence of references to Armenians in the 4-volume history of the Turkish nation, *Tarih* [History], which was published in 1931. Still, Armenians did appear peripherally in history textbooks until the early 1940s, and the deportation was mentioned briefly in textbooks up until the early 1940s (Ulgen 2010: 309-364). But Hovannisian notes that, in this period, “the rare references to Armenians in textbooks were

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<sup>187</sup> Bobelian writes “when the Armenian issue came up at Lausanne, the Turkish representatives stoutly dismissed any talk of land grants or compensation of any kind. Joseph Grew, the chief of the American delegation, noted that ‘there is no subject upon which the Turks are more fixed in obstinacy’” (2009: 71). Also see: Gürün 1985: 294.

<sup>188</sup> Göçek makes this point in several publications (e.g., Göçek 2006; Göçek and Bloxham 2008). It is not strictly true that the issue was silenced completely from 1923. One key exception is Atatürk’s famous *Nutuk* (literally: speech), in which he established the official history of the War of Independence, the establishment of the Republic, and his central role in the formation of the nation and the state. This speech was delivered in 1927, and Ulgen notes that, in the speech Atatürk referred several times to the Armenian deportations and the Armenian question (2010: 289-299). Ulgen’s analysis reveals how Atatürk’s language in this speech has been picked up and repeated in much of the subsequent official discourse on the Armenian question.

<sup>189</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 2, Kemalism is the official ideology of the Turkish state.

<sup>190</sup> Author’s interview with Turkish researcher [T-9], Ankara, April 2008.

<sup>191</sup> See: Nişanyan 2011; Öktem 2008; Foss 1992; Kouymjian 1985. And Kouymjian writes that “the Turkish government has gone to great lengths to efface all trace of Armenian civilization on the historical homeland; thus, it consistently changed the names of towns, villages and hamlets in the eastern provinces in the late 1950s, as evidenced by the Turkish census of 1959-60. It is for this reason that, for example, the official *United States Gazetteer* for Turkey, last printed in 1958, reflects place names which no longer exist in the area east of Aintab. Roughly 90% of the names of historical Armenia have been changed; only the major cities – Van, Bitlis, Erzurum etc. – have been spared” (1985: 173). Göçek notes this in her analysis of Turkish-Armenian literature published in the post-1915 period, writing: “this economic marginalization of non-Muslim minorities in the newly emerging Republic structure is paralleled by significant spatial exclusion. Armenians’ cognitive maps are literally erased as the Turkish state and military systematically replace Armenian place names with Turkish ones” (2011: 202).

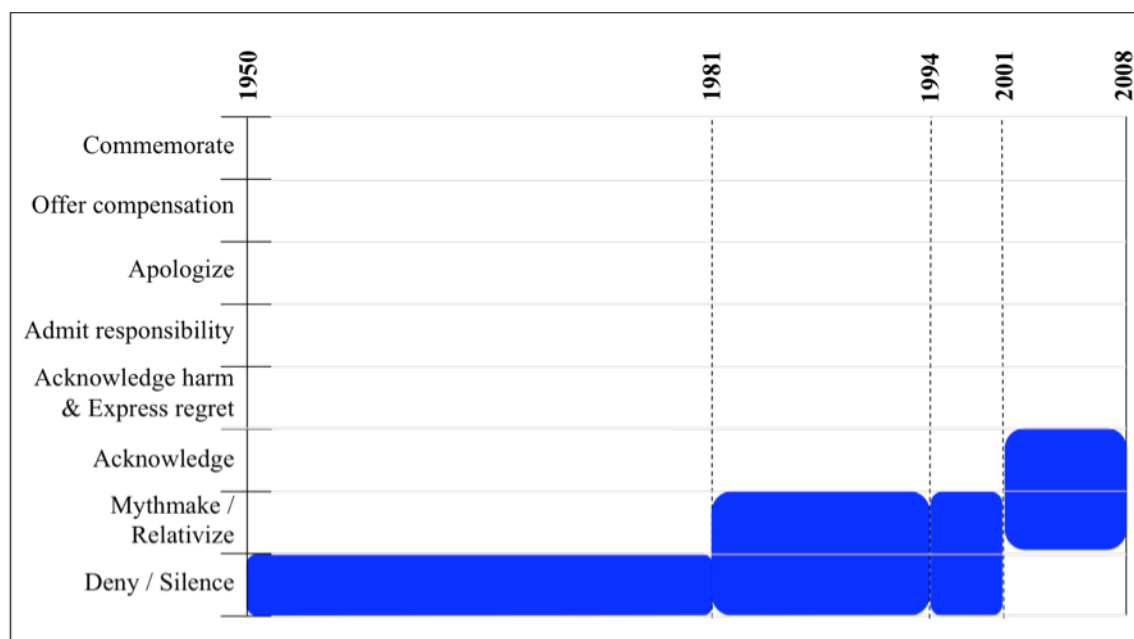
<sup>192</sup> On this point, see especially: Bloxham 2005.



found only in brief passages relating to sinister but unsuccessful Armenian and Greek imperialistic designs to encroach upon the integrity of the Turkish homeland” (1986: 120-1). In conjunction with this domestic silence, the Turkish government also fought to silence the issue internationally through diplomatic channels, international pressure and a campaign to improve Turkey’s image internationally (Bobelian 2009: 77; Hovannisian 1986: 113).<sup>193</sup>

### ***Outlining the trajectory of the official narrative, 1950-2008***

Finally, in this last section, I briefly outline the four phases that I have identified in the trajectory of Turkey’s narrative over the period from 1950 through 2008. The phases are depicted in Figure 3.1 (below), and they are discussed in detail in the next two chapters.



**Figure 3.1.** Phases in the Turkish narrative, 1950 – 2008

**Phase One** began in 1950 and extended to the end of 1980. In this phase the official narrative remained on the first step of the continuum, with the content of the narrative involving both denials of the events of the genocide and efforts to silence references to the events both

<sup>193</sup> One oft-cited example of Turkey’s diplomatic efforts to silence references to the genocide is its success, with the help of the US State Department, in preventing Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios from producing a film in the mid-1930s based on the best-selling historical novel, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* by the Austrian Jewish writer Franz Werfel (Minasian 1986-87). This novel told the story of the collective resistance and survival of an Armenian village during the genocide. In this book, which was based on real events, several thousand Armenians built fortifications on a mountaintop (*Musa Dagh*), defended themselves against the Ottoman military forces that were sent to end their resistance, and were ultimately rescued by a French ship. The Turkish Ambassador to the United States, Mehmet Münir Ertegün, lobbied long and hard to cancel the making of this movie, escalating pressure on both the US State Department, the US Embassy in Turkey and on MGM executives until the latter finally agreed not to make the film. In one letter to a State Department official, Ertegün wrote: “I am sure that you will appreciate how much importance I place on preventing the misleading of public opinion in America through erroneous features concerning the history of my country” (Bobelian 2009: 84). And in a signal of just how seriously Turkey took this issue, “Ertegün told an MGM official at a meeting in Washington: ‘If the movie is made, Turkey will launch a worldwide campaign against it. It rekindles the Armenian question. The Armenian question is settled’” (*Ibid.*).

domestically and internationally. Since the 1920s, Turkish officials had willed this issue “settled,” and several structural factors in this period severely limited the possibility of any challenges to the official narrative even arising.

**Phase Two** began in 1981 and continued through the early 1990s. Beginning in 1981, the official Turkish narrative of the Armenian question emerged out of the earlier silence to directly discuss some aspects of the issue, but not the deportation and deaths of Armenians. While the narrative continued to deny and silence the events in this phase, it also began to actively mythmake about and relativize the events. Moreover, these dramatic changes in the official narrative were accompanied by a set of coordinated strategies that targeted domestic and international audiences, with the goal of spreading the official narrative and discrediting the agents and content of challenges to it. The central drivers of these changes were sustained international pressures and negative attention focused on Turkey’s official narrative. However, the timing of the change was determined by domestic politics, and the content of the changes was primarily shaped by Turkish officials, particularly military and bureaucratic elites.

**Phase Three** began in 1994 and extended through 2000. In contrast to the other phases in this and the Japanese narrative, however, this was more an interlude than a proper phase, given that the shift in the content of the narrative *did not* constitute a change on the continuum. Overall, the strategies employed to defend the official narrative were largely continued from Phase Two, although the energy devoted to these efforts waned in this phase. There were subtle shifts in the content of the narrative in this phase, some of which offered previews of themes that fully emerged in the fourth phase. In particular, official arguments in a few instances referred not just to ‘Armenians’ claims,’ but were also directed against claims that there had been massacres or even a genocide of Greeks and Assyrians. In communications directed at domestic audiences, the tone of the official narrative was slightly more virulent in this phase. In contrast, in communications directed at international audiences, the arguments were more measured and clinical. Importantly, despite major structural change at the international level and the beginnings of domestic challenges to the official narrative, the content of the narrative was remarkably stable in this period, which highlights the limitations of international variables in fully accounting for the trajectory of this narrative.

**Phase Four** began in 2001 and extends until the end of the period of analysis in 2008. In this phase the official narrative shifted one step along the continuum, continuing to mythmake about and relativize the events, but no longer silencing them. Moreover, the official narrative also began to acknowledge certain basic facts about the genocide. These changes were made by a range of Turkish officials and institutions, primarily in response to two factors: increased international recognition of the genocide, particularly in 1999 and 2000, and the broadening of domestic challenges to and questioning of the official narrative. In making these changes, Turkish officials drew on largely the same set of strategies to defend and disseminate the official narrative that had been developed in Phase Two, and again drew on support from societal actors within Turkey and internationally. The replication of these strategies highlights how Turkish officials ‘learned’ a repertoire of actions in the 1980s, which they were able to successfully redeploy in this most recent phase.

– Chapter 4 –  
**Out of the Darkness (1950 – early 1990s)**

“The Turkish Government wants to silence these (accusations [made by Armenian terrorists]), ... but in these situations an official silence is the worst policy of all. Now, after we have kept an official silence for years and years, we are inundating (the world) with more or less propaganda material, which is just as wrong.”

-- Selçuk Bakkalbaşı, press counselor, Turkish Embassy, Paris, 1982<sup>194</sup>

***Introduction***

In the two phases covered in this chapter, Turkey’s narrative of the Armenian Genocide shifted from silencing and denying the genocide during the thirty-year period from 1950 to the beginning of 1981, to actively defending an articulated position in the second phase, which began in 1981 and extended through the early 1990s. In this second phase, the official narrative continued to silence and deny the events, but it also involved mythmaking and relativizing about the events. This shift involved substantial continuity, particularly in the denial of Turkish intentionality in and responsibility for the deaths of Armenians, and in the silencing of the facts of the forced deportation and massacre of Armenians. It also entailed dramatic changes in the strategy used to defend the official narrative, and clear shifts in the arguments marshaled to rebut charges of genocide and massacre. As this chapter shows, the shift between the first and second phase was primarily prompted by international pressures. The content of the shift, however, was determined by Turkish officials, with the help of retired diplomats, societal actors in Turkey, and groups outside of Turkey whose help was actively cultivated by Turkish officials in the early to mid-1980s.<sup>195</sup>

***Phase One (1950 – 1980): The silence continues***

In this phase the official narrative remained on the first step of the continuum, with the content of the narrative involving both denials of the events of the genocide and a range of efforts to silence references to the events both domestically and internationally. Since the 1920s, Turkish officials had willed this issue “settled,” and several structural factors in this period severely limited the possibility of any challenges to the official narrative even arising.

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<sup>194</sup> As quoted in an article in *The Globe and Mail* (Davidian and Ferchl 1982).

<sup>195</sup> In this and the next chapter, my discussion of each of the four phases includes three sections: on the context, independent variables, and dependent variables. I discuss both the domestic and international context, and domestic and international factors in the section on independent variables. The section on dependent variables is broken down into separate discussions of the content of the narrative and the strategies used to support and disseminate the official narrative. The order of these sections and subsections is not identical; rather, in each phase I have organized the sections to ensure the optimal flow of the narrative for the reader.

## *The domestic and international context in Phase One*

### The domestic context

Domestically, the most significant constraints on potential challenges arose from the relatively poor quality of Turkey's democracy, including a range of taboos and real limits on freedom of expression, the continued process of cultural homogenization and the marginalization of minorities.

Only in 1946 did Turkey hold its first multi-party election, and in May 1950, in the second multi-party election, Atatürk's Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) was overwhelmingly voted out of power. Thus 1950 marks the formal beginning of Turkey's democracy and the beginning of my analysis of the trajectory of Turkey's official narrative. During this first phase, Turkish politics was marked by upheaval, and the domestic sphere was increasingly dominated by the military, which overthrew elected governments three times – in 1960, in 1971, and again in 1980.

After the first coup in 1960, a new constitution was written, introducing a series of checks and balances on political power, and increasing freedoms and civil liberties (Zürcher 1998: 257). And yet, while these were positive changes, this first coup set a precedent for the military's active intervention in civilian politics, and with the establishment of the National Security Council, the new constitution formally established a political role for the military in Turkish politics (Zürcher 1998: 258; Findley 2010: 310-2). Also, in the mid- to late-1960s, as the political landscape diversified, more extreme currents in Turkish politics emerged, both on the left and the right, which laid the ground for the internal conflict of the late-1970s (Zürcher 1998: 266-70; Findley 2010: 313-6). Only eleven years after the military's first intervention in Turkey's politics, it acted again, in March 1971. In contrast to the 1960 coup, the 1971 coup resulted in a dramatic weakening of Turkey's democracy, a major crackdown on leftist parties and organizations, and the further expansion of the military's political role (Zürcher 1998: 271-3). And while power was returned to civilians within a couple of years, the period of civilian control was again short-lived.

In addition to a range of changes in Turkey's economy and demographic makeup that occurred within this phase, the state-led process of ethnic homogenization (i.e., Turkification) – which had begun under the Young Turk's rule in WWI – continued, with a series of events that were either planned or orchestrated by agents of the Turkish state.<sup>196</sup> These policies 'encouraged' many of

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<sup>196</sup> Thus, the infamous wealth tax (*Varlık Vergisi*) was passed in 1942 and repealed two years later, and succeeded in encouraging or forcing the emigration of thousands of Turkey's non-Muslim minorities, particularly Greeks, Jews and Armenians (Akar 1999; Aktar 2000; Kurban 2004/5: 349; Lewis 1968: 297-301). The 6-7 September 1955 pogrom against Greeks (and other minorities) in Istanbul, which appeared to be a spontaneous, nationalist reaction to rumors that Atatürk's former house in Thessaloniki, Greece had been bombed, was later revealed to have been instigated by agents of the Turkish state (Kurban 2004/5: 349-350; Ökten 2007: 101; Zürcher 1998: 241-242; Vryonis 2005). This pogrom prompted a further emigration of Greeks and other minorities from Turkey. Similarly, "the forced evacuation of 12,000 Greeks of Greek citizenship during the rule of İsmet İnönü in 1964 was followed by the departure of about 40,000 people" (Hekimoğlu 2001). And finally, the communal basis and properties of those minorities that had chosen to remain in Turkey were further threatened by the Law of Foundations. In 1974 by the Turkish Court of Cassation interpreted this 1936 law to mean that non-Muslim minority groups and

Turkey's non-Muslim minority citizens to leave the country, and continued "the 'nationalization of the economy' by way of the transfer of wealth from non-Muslims to Muslims" (Kurban 2004/5: 351).<sup>197</sup> These policies of Turkification reinforced the domestic silence on this issue in two ways. First, by encouraging, facilitating and (in some cases) forcing the emigration of non-Muslim minorities from Turkey, those who or whose families had suffered from the Armenian Genocide and from the CUP's policies against other non-Muslim minority groups in the same period left Turkey and were thus not present to remember and/or provide evidence of this past. Second, those Armenians (and other non-Muslim minorities) who remained were cowed and coerced into silence about their suffering in the genocide,<sup>198</sup> both through these policies and through the ongoing, implicit questioning of their 'loyalty' to the nation and state.<sup>199</sup>

### The international context

In foreign policy terms, Turkey solidified its orientation toward the West in this phase. In the years after the end of World War II, Turkey became an active and important member of the Western bloc in the Cold War, joining many of the major international organizations established by the United States and Western European countries in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The most notable of these was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which Turkey joined in 1952. Turkey was also a founding member of the United Nations (UN) in 1945, of the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (later the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD) in 1948, and of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE, later the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE). In 1949 Turkey joined the Council of Europe, and in 1963, Turkey signed an Association Agreement with the European Economic Community (the EEC, later the European Union), beginning its long effort to join the regional organization.

In addition to these institutional steps, Turkey's location on the eastern edge of the West, its shared border with the Soviet Union, and the large role that the military played in ruling Turkey,

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organizations were not entitled to own any properties that they had not already owned and declared to the state in 1936 (Kurban 2004/5: 350; Demir 2002). Following this decision, the Turkish government started to confiscate many properties owned by minority foundations.

<sup>197</sup> Of course, this was not the first time the state had confiscated the properties of non-Muslim minorities. The massive, bureaucratically-orchestrated confiscation, appropriation and redistribution of the 'abandoned' properties of Armenian and Assyrian minorities was one of the central outcomes of the deportation and widespread ethnic cleansing that took place in the Ottoman Empire during WWI under the leadership of the Young Turks. Illustrating this parallel, Kaiser writes that "The law [i.e., the 26 September 1915 law on "so-called 'Abandoned Properties'"] also officially cleared the way for the confiscation of buildings and land classified as pious foundations that had already been registered with the Ministry of Pious Foundations and the Finance Ministry. These properties were distributed to immigrants" (2006: 60). See: Üngör 2011b; Üngör and Polatel 2011; Kaiser 2006.

<sup>198</sup> For example, in her analysis of the literary works of Turkish-Armenian writers, Göçek notes that "it is therefore no accident that the post-1915 generation of Turkish-Armenians applies most self-censorship [i.e., compared to writers from other groups within Turkey society] because of the precariousness of their social location. In the narrative that took them decades to present to the Turkish national audience, the post-1915 generation of Turkish-Armenians mentions the Armenian massacres that formed an indelible component of their ancestral memory in a most obscure and fleeting manner, almost as if they were embarrassed by the experience" (2011: 191).

<sup>199</sup> One researcher commented that minority groups always face the question of loyalty and the need to show loyalty to the Turkish state (Author's interview with researcher [T-22b], Istanbul, April 2009). Another academic observed that Armenians have been perceived as traitors and as potential threats to the nation since the very beginning of the Republic (Author's interview with researcher [T-9], Ankara, April 2008).

contributed to its importance within the context of the Cold War. Turkey's role as the physical bulwark against the further spread of Soviet influence was explicitly identified in the 1947 Truman Doctrine, in which the US committed itself to preventing the spread of the Soviet sphere of influence. As a result of this commitment, the US established a number of military bases in Turkey over the subsequent decade. Moreover, the US (and NATO) supported the modernization of Turkey's military, improvements in the training of its officers, and the development of its economy with high levels of both military and economic aid; all of which were crucial to Turkey's political and economic development of in this period (Findley 2010: 309).

Finally, given that the Turkish military was demonstrably committed to fully participating in the West's activities during the Cold War, the great powers – in particular the United States – did not interfere in Turkey's domestic politics or in issues from its past.<sup>200</sup> This *Realpolitik* calculus (Bloxham 2005), combined with the relative (economic and political) weakness of the Armenian diaspora in these decades and the Soviet Union's desire to keep nationalism in Soviet Armenia in check (Bobelian 2009: 51),<sup>201</sup> allowed Turkey to ignore and, when necessary, suppress the issue of the Armenian Genocide.<sup>202</sup> This point was acknowledged in 1985 by Turkey's Deputy Foreign Minister Kamuran Gürün, who noted that: "the division of the world into two spheres, and especially the warm feelings and friendship which developed between Turkey and the USA during the Korean War ... , did not make it possible for antagonism towards the Turks, which was isolated within the Armenian communities in some countries, to reach significant levels" (1985: 296-7).

#### *Independent variables: Few pressures for change in Phase One*

As a result of the domestic constraints and international context discussed above, there were few pressures on Turkey to address or discuss the Armenian question.

#### Domestic factors

Reflecting the tabooed nature of the issue and the near-complete domestic silence with regard to the Armenian Genocide, only a few books were published on the topic in the decades following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, and they were often by retired government officials. This is an early example of the ways in which such officials, especially diplomats, have remained involved in shaping the official narrative. In this first phase, some of the retired officials were individuals who had been involved in the deportation and massacres. In contrast,

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<sup>200</sup> As one interviewee observed, after the Cold War started, no one would have listened to a few Armenians, since Turkey was the spearhead in the West's fight with Communism in the Cold War (Author's interview with a Turkish political scientist [T-27], Ankara, May 2008). Bobelian (2009) extensively documents US efforts to suppress references to the genocide in the US.

<sup>201</sup> Until the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary protests in 1965, "the USSR had prohibited Armenian scholars from studying the tragedy [i.e., the genocide]. The state extinguished any chance of erecting a public memorial. It censored those who brought up the topic. And it refused to sponsor Armenian claims against Turkey. ... Soviet authorities took every means to smother any talk of the Genocide, even among those who lived through the tragedy" (Bobelian 2009: 123).

<sup>202</sup> Göçek writes that "the explicitly destructive element of this [Cold War] arrangement was the prioritization of security and political stability over democratization. Any attempts by the Turkish populace to assert their rights through political participation were controlled, contained and often violently suppressed by the Turkish state" (2011: 137).

those retired officials who were active on this issue in subsequent phases had been socialized in their views of the event through the process of defending the official narrative. In both cases, retired officials have generated feedback effects, perpetuating certain themes in the official narrative, reinforcing state actors' commitment to continuity in the narrative, and in some cases initiating new themes.

One such book – *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni meselesi* [The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question] – was published at the very beginning of this phase and came to be situated at the center of Turkish historiography of the Armenian question. It was written by Esat Uras, who, when the book was published in 1950, had just retired as a Turkish diplomat. Of equal importance is that fact that Uras was a former Unionist official who had been involved in the genocide as a high-level bureaucrat in the General Directorate for Tribes and Immigrants, which was the unit within the Interior Ministry that directed the deportation of Armenians and resettlement of other groups in their 'vacated' properties, businesses and homes (Üngör 2011a: 296; Bloxham 2005: 213).<sup>203</sup> As Fatma Ulgen writes:

“During the war, as the Director of the Armenian Desk ... , he [Uras] was in the team administering the Armenian prosecutions. He had been present in the interrogations of the Armenian komitadjis including those in Aleppo. His police tasks also included the collection and preparation of a variety of propaganda materials, which in the future would be used by none other than himself in crafting claims and arguments for modern Turkey's most authoritative work on the Armenian issue” (2010: 367).

Importantly, the arguments made by Uras in this book have served as the basis for many later works on the Armenian question written in Turkey. In particular, the historian Torben Jørgensen writes that “Esad Uras launched two arguments concerning the genocide that have since been central to the position taken by the Turks. In the first place it was in fact the Armenians who had murdered thousands of Turks, not the other way round. ... Secondly, there were never any massacres of the Armenian population. The so-called 'relocations' took place in an orderly manner” (2003: 206). Moreover, this book itself assumed the status of an 'official' statement in the 1980s, when it was republished by the quasi-official Turkish Historical Society in an expanded version and in English translation.

In addition, a few memoirs were published in the 1950s by former CUP officials who had been involved in the genocide. In these memoirs, the writers mainly attempted to disavow their own involvement in the massacres, and to downplay the massacres themselves (Kaiser 2003). Many of these memoirs were officially banned until the 1960s or later (Ulgen 2010: 285).

### International factors

In the decades following the genocide, Armenians were scattered in various countries and were preoccupied with struggles to establish new lives and families, find missing relatives, and deal with the individual and collective trauma of the loss of lives, belongings and a communal homeland (Bobelian 2009: 107-112). Moreover, Armenians in the diaspora were divided amongst themselves, with some supporting Soviet Armenia, while others fervently rejected

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<sup>203</sup> For more on Uras, see: Kaiser 2003: 12-14; Ulgen 2010.

Soviet Armenia because it was under communist leadership and was part of the Soviet Union (Bobelian 2009: 111-19). As a result, Armenians in the diaspora did not mount any sustained political efforts related to the genocide, and scholarship on the genocide and in the broader area of Armenian studies was scant prior to 1965 (Bobelian 2009: 111).<sup>204</sup> In 1965, however, groups throughout the Armenian diaspora mobilized to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, coming together politically for the first time in decades.<sup>205</sup> The most significant of these commemorations was the massive, spontaneous and unapproved protest that took place in Soviet Armenia on 24 April 1965.<sup>206</sup>

While some argue that the 1965 protests in Soviet Armenia and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the genocide on 24 April 1965 had an impact on the official Turkish narrative,<sup>207</sup> I found no notable changes in the content of the Turkish government's official narrative or in its strategies for defending the narrative. While commemorative events organized in other countries were mentioned in the Turkish press, the main focus of such newspaper articles was on the community of Armenians who still lived in Turkey, asserting that Turkish-Armenians were vehemently opposed to the commemoration ceremonies being organized abroad, and that they were loyal Turkish citizens (Bali 2007: 62).<sup>208</sup> Two retired Turkish diplomats, both of whom were working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1965, stated that the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations and protests that were organized in the Armenian diaspora and that occurred in Soviet Armenia had no impact on the Turkish government's policy on the Armenian question.<sup>209</sup> This is not strictly true, since Turkish diplomats, who were concerned about the increased attention to the issue, did increase their attempts to tamp down and suppress references to the genocide internationally (Bobelian 2009: 127-130). However, these diplomatic efforts were consistent with official Turkish efforts prior to the 1965 anniversary.

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<sup>204</sup> In an unpublished article, Marc Mamigonian traces the development of the field of Armenian studies in the United States. He notes that the first effort to establish a program focused on Armenian studies was in 1933, but did not get off the ground. More than two decades later, the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) was established in 1955, and spearheaded the creation of two chairs in Armenian Studies in the US, the first at Harvard in 1959 and the second at UCLA in 1969.

<sup>205</sup> Large commemorations were held in Beirut, Athens, Paris, Buenos Aires, Boston, New York, San Francisco, and in many other countries and cities (Bobelian 2009: 125).

<sup>206</sup> On the protest in Yerevan, see: Bloxham 2005: 215; Bobelian 2009: 121-5. As mentioned in Chapter 3, April 24<sup>th</sup> is the annual date of commemoration for the Armenian Genocide. These protests led Soviet authorities to agree to build a memorial to the genocide in Yerevan, which was completed and opened two years later on the 52<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the genocide, on 24 April 1967.

<sup>207</sup> For example, Hovannisian writes: "in 1965 the worldwide Armenian commemorations of the fiftieth anniversary of the genocide and the increasingly demonstrative and militant stance taken by many second- and third-generation Armenians in the dispersion ushered in a new phase in Turkish strategy. While continuing to capitalize upon the geopolitical, military, and economic importance of their country in efforts to pressure foreign governments to disregard Armenian manifestations, Turkish leaders also authorized an active campaign of counterpropaganda. The resulting books and brochures were usually sent out from Ankara in the month of April, to detract from the annual Armenian commemorative programs marking the onset of the 1915 massacres, and were addressed primarily to policymakers and opinion makers abroad, to members of legislatures and state and local governments, and to libraries, scholars, and teachers" (1986: 113).

<sup>208</sup> E.g., on 24 April 1965, Turkish-Armenian leaders gathered in Taksim Square in Istanbul to demonstrate their loyalty to the Turkish nation and to Atatürk (Bali 2007: 64).

<sup>209</sup> Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-31], Istanbul, April 2009; Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24a], Ankara, May 2008



And while these protests and commemorations did not have an immediate effect on Turkey's narrative, they were the catalyst for further political action in the Armenian diaspora. Following these protests, Hovannisian writes that "Armenian memorials were erected, studies and memoirs related to the genocide appeared in various languages, and a rising generation took to the streets with placards and chants to remind the Turkish government and the world that the Armenian Question still existed" (1986: 122).

*The dependent variable: An imposed silence on the topic of the Armenian question*

Turkey's position within the context of the Cold War protected and reinforced its silence about the Armenian Genocide in this phase. At the same time, the constraints on democratic freedoms and the oppression of minorities within the domestic sphere checked the emergence of domestic challenges to the official narrative. As a result, the official narrative in this phase was characterized by denial and efforts to silence references to the genocide.

#### Strategies to silence the issue

Internationally, Turkish officials lobbied through diplomatic channels to suppress references to the issue (e.g., Bobelian 2009: 127-134). Thus in communications with American diplomats, Turkish officials emphasized their sensitivity to any reference to the events, noting for example in a conversation in 1969 that the Turkish people "are very sensitive about reference to any partition of Turkey, and therefore, if there is increased propaganda by the Armenian American community, ... there would be reaction in Turkey" (Bobelian 2009: 130). In public, however, Turkish officials said relatively little about the Armenian question. Reflecting on this strategy, Özdemir notes that, "in the 57-year period from 1923 to 1970, there was not a single publication in foreign languages [i.e., languages other than Turkish] that clearly elucidated the Turkish thesis" on the Armenian question (2008: 10 – my translation).

Domestically, there was only a smattering of official publications on the Armenian question. A few books published by the quasi-official Turkish Historical Society addressed the topic. In particular, Volumes II and III of the historian Yusuf Bayur's series on the history of the Turkish revolution (*Türk İnkılâbı Tarihi*) extensively discussed the Armenian question and events related to Armenians before, during and after the war. Most notably, "Bayur writes in his *Türk İnkılap Tarihi* (The History of the Turkish Revolution) that between 1914-1918 800,000 Armenians and 200,000 Greeks died 'due to murders and deportations or in labour camps (*amele taburu*)'" (Necef 2003: 231, citing from Bayur 1975 (III:IV): 787). This figure was much higher than other official estimates of the death toll, both at that time and since, which reflects the fact that at that point the Turkish Historical Society had not yet become invested in defending and reproducing the official narrative to the extent that it later became. In addition, a Turkish Senator, Sadi Koçuş, published a book on the topic in 1967, which was called *Tarih Boyunca Ermeniler ve Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri* [Armenians and Turkish-Armenian Relations throughout History]. The book was written at the behest of the Turkish President Cemal Gürsel, who invited Koçuş to do so after the latter made an impassioned speech in the Turkish Parliament on 27 April 1965, in which he lamented that Turkish officials knew next to nothing about the Armenian question and were unprepared to address the issue (Özdemir 2008: 55-8). And in the 1970s, two books were published on the Armenian question by the military archives (*Genelkurmay Askerî Tarih ve*

*Stratejik Etüt (ATASE) Başkanlığı*).<sup>210</sup> And while these few books discussed the events, the rarity of such publications testifies to the general silencing of the deportation and massacres within Turkey. And in the few books that were published in this period, themes that had been first developed after the war and in the 1920s were rearticulated.

Furthermore, Armenians, the Armenian question and events related to Armenians during WWI were completely left out of Turkish history high school textbooks.<sup>211</sup> Throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, silence prevailed on the topic of the 1915 Armenian Genocide, and the 1915 deportation was not mentioned in *any* textbook. Overall, the impression of Armenians that emerged from these textbooks was of their irrelevance and near non-existence within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>212</sup> For example, one textbook notes that in the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres,<sup>213</sup> “Anatolia was partitioned into spheres of influence. Only a few provinces in Anatolia’s center were left to Turks” (Akşit 1951: 196). There is, however, no specific reference to *whom* these spheres of influence were for, despite the fact that this treaty recognized an independent Republic of Armenia and specified that parts of Ottoman territory in eastern Anatolia might be given to this new state. In addition, Ülgen highlights another theme that appeared in some history textbooks between 1944 and 1980: that Armenians had killed many Turks during the war, and that these killings were the reason why Turkish forces attacked the nascent Armenian state in 1918.<sup>214</sup>

#### The content of the narrative

On the rare occasion when the issue *was* publicly acknowledged by Turkish officials, several themes were emphasized.

The point that was most emphasized in this phase, but which did not appear in subsequent ones, was that this was an issue that was best left in the past, and that to raise it again would serve no good purpose. For example, in a letter to the editor of *The New York Times* in February 1957, Altamur Kılıç, the Press Attaché at the Turkish Embassy in Washington, emphasized that bringing up the Armenian issue “could serve no purpose but harp on distant and bitter chords” (Kilic 1957). Likewise, in May 1965, in another letter to the editor of *The New York Times*, Kılıç asserted that “it would serve no practical purpose at this time to revive old and bitter memories on both sides and to attempt to put the blame on somebody for tragic events which took place so many years and so many generations ago.” Instead, he suggested that “the best thing to do now would be to forget them and to strive together for a bright future for all citizens of Turkey in a

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<sup>210</sup> The military archive’s publications were: Saral 1970 and Sakarya 1979.

<sup>211</sup> This discussion is based on my analysis of eleven high school history textbooks published between 1951 and 1980. These textbooks are listed in Appendix 1.

<sup>212</sup> For an extended discussion of this trend in Turkish history writing in general, see: Foss 1992.

<sup>213</sup> This was the peace treaty, mentioned in Chapter 3, which was signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Allied Powers at the end of WWI, but which was superseded by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne.

<sup>214</sup> Ülgen writes that a 1944 textbook referred to Armenians’ “‘systematic killing of the Turks’ by the Tashnak government” in Armenia. She further notes that “Su’s 1955 textbook mentions that Armenians were ‘killing the Turks with torture’. Sapolyo’s 1963 and 1973 textbooks just mention ‘assaults and incursions’. Serdarlar’s 1979 narrative ... deploys the expression ‘killing en masse’. All accounts, however, regardless of the variance in their rhetoric on the mass killings across the border [i.e., with Armenia] argue that what triggered the Armenian expedition was the assaults of the Armenians on Turks” (2010: 407).

better world” (Kilic 1965). Moreover, when reference was made to the Armenian Genocide in a draft UN report in 1973 (see below), one of the arguments that the Turkish representative made for why this reference should be removed from the report was that it “would revive flames of hatred” (Van Boven 1985: 169).

A second theme that began in this period and has remained an element of the official narrative was the argument that the period during which the ‘Armenian events’ occurred was a dark time during which *everyone* suffered (i.e., not only Armenians.) The first example of this that I found was in Kılıç’s letter to the editor in 1965, where he remarked, “Those were indeed dark days, were full of misery and suffering for all our ancestors” (Kilic 1965). He also argued that “there have to be at least two sides to every story” (Kilic 1965). In later phases, this point was implied in references to the “Armenian view” and to the lack of consensus and the controversial nature of this issue, both of which communicated the assumption that there are different sides to this story.

Another theme that emerged in this phase and continued in the next one was the argument that Turkey is a tolerant country. In 1965, Kılıç pointed out that Turkish Armenians “today live in our modern republic as equal and undiscriminated [sic] citizens” (Kilic 1965). This point recurred in the 1980s, with references to both the Ottoman Empire’s and Turkey’s historic tolerance toward Jews, and to the continued equality of Armenians within contemporary Turkish society.

Notably absent from the few public statements during this period were references to the deportation or the deaths of Armenians. One exception was in an interview in an Armenian-American publication in 1978, when the Turkish Foreign Minister Gündüz Ökçün explained that “ ‘What the Ottoman government did was to order the deportation of Armenians from one part of the Empire to another. This was done not in order to annihilate the Armenians who lived in Turkey, but to force their relocation’ ” (Guroian 1986: 137). However, given that this interview was with an Armenian newspaper, to elide the deportation itself would have been quite difficult.

### ***Phase Two (1981 – 1993): “Determined efforts to enlighten the public on this issue”<sup>215</sup>***

In this phase, the official narrative shifted one step on the continuum, adding the step of mythmaking and relativizing. As in the previous phase, the narrative continued to deny and silence the events. In this phase, though, the official narrative began to actively relativize the events, and also came to include a number of alternative explanations and accounts.

Beginning in 1981, the Turkish narrative of the Armenian question quickly emerged out of the earlier silence to directly discuss some aspects of the issue, but not the deportation and deaths of Armenians. The narrative that emerged included several key themes, including arguments that the events of 1915 should not be termed as massacres or as genocide, claims that Armenians

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<sup>215</sup> This quote is from a statement made by the Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ulusu in a press conference on 16 October 1982 (*Ankara Domestic Service* 1982b). Toward the end of the press conference he talked about official efforts to combat Armenian terrorism, which was at its height in 1982. Ulusu stated: “we now see that those who had been content to believe in unilateral claims are beginning to have more objective views on the issue as more and more historical facts, based on documents, begin to surface. We will continue our determined efforts to enlighten the public on the issue.”

(like Turks at the time) had instead died of famine and disease, and claims that more Turks had died than Armenians. Officials further argued that if politicians took Armenians' claims seriously, it would encourage or legitimize terrorism. They also contended that this issue should be left to historians to evaluate. The narrative was disseminated in textbooks written for Turkish students, in a range of publications that were written and/or planned by government officials and agencies, and in speeches by Turkish officials. Moreover, these dramatic changes in the official narrative were accompanied by a set of coordinated strategies that targeted domestic and international audiences, with the goal of spreading the official narrative and discrediting the agents and content of challenges to it.

The central drivers of these changes were sustained international pressures and negative attention focused on Turkey's official narrative, particularly resulting from Armenian terrorist attacks and international recognition efforts. Importantly, however, the changes occurred at a lag of several years from the start of these international pressures. Thus while these developments highlight the importance of international pressures in prompting change, the changes in this phase also illustrate the central role played by official actors in shaping the timing and the content of changes in the official narrative. Finally, in this phase retired diplomats and officials, along with historians in the Turkish Historical Society, continued to be very involved in helping Turkish officials produce the state's narrative.

#### *Independent variables: Sources of change*

While the official silence continued in the 1950s and 1960s, political events in the mid- to late-1970s challenged and brought international attention to Turkey's silence. In the wake of the fiftieth anniversary of the genocide in 1965, Armenian individuals and groups began working to increase international awareness and recognition of the Armenian Genocide, which, despite international condemnation of the events contemporaneously (Kloian 1985), had largely slipped from international attention (Bloxxham 2005: 215; Bobelian 2009: 120). While initial efforts at gaining more widespread recognition of the Armenian Genocide focused mostly at the level of local or domestic politics, international attention was recaptured by an act of violence that had strong reverberations.

Armenian terrorist attacks: "Under the threat of terrorism"<sup>216</sup>

The first Armenian terrorist attack took place in January 1973, when two Turkish diplomats were assassinated in California by Gourgen Yanikian, a 78-year old Armenian-American survivor of the genocide who had lost his entire family in the events (Bobelian 2009: 1-5, 141-163). While this first attack on Turkish diplomats was carried out by a sole individual,<sup>217</sup> later attacks were carried out by several different terrorist groups, among whom the two most prominent and active

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<sup>216</sup> This quote is taken from a statement by a Turkish Embassy official, who was quoted in a 1983 *Wall Street Journal* as saying: " 'We did nothing to make retribution for. We were on the land for 1,000 years. There was a civil war within a world war . . .,' says Turkish Embassy official Mithat Balkan. 'And even if we did have something to talk about, we would never talk under the threat of terrorism' " (Adams 1983).

<sup>217</sup> While the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) found no evidence to support the Turkish government's initial suspicion that Yanikian's actions were the result of a wider conspiracy, his murders inspired others to take up violence to bring attention to Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide. Bobelian notes that this had been Yanikian's hope: that his murder of the two Turkish diplomats *would* urge others to violence (2009: 158).

were: the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia, and the Justice Commandos for the Armenian Genocide (JCAG).<sup>218</sup> There was a handful of attacks between 1975 and 1978, but the number of attacks dramatically increased in 1979, and increased each year thereafter, peaking in 1983 and ending in 1986 (Dugan et al. 2008: 232). In all, there were an estimated 240 attacks (Dugan et al. 2008: 240), and they primarily targeted Turkish diplomats posted abroad, especially in Western countries, with the stated goals of pressuring Turkey to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, to pay reparations, and to ‘return’ territory to Armenia/ns (Dugan et al. 2008: 233). According to a study by a retired Turkish ambassador, 31 diplomats, diplomatic employees or family members were killed in these attacks, in addition to dozens of other deaths and hundreds of injuries (Lütem 2008: 52, 55).<sup>219</sup>

For the Turkish government, and especially for Turkish diplomats, the first attack in 1973 seemingly came out of the blue (Lütem 2008: 37).<sup>220</sup> Reflecting this, many of the elites I interviewed reported that the start of the Armenian terrorist attacks in the mid-1970s first raised the issue of the Armenian Genocide in Turks’ awareness, and more importantly, put the issue on Turkey’s political agenda, where it had previously been a non-issue.<sup>221</sup> Moreover, these attacks, and the feeling of being besieged and physically threatened, profoundly affected Turkish diplomats. Many were directly touched by this terrorism, losing colleagues, friends and even family members. Highlighting the presence of this loss is the fact that every conference room in the Foreign Ministry is named after an assassinated diplomat.<sup>222</sup> In addition, diplomats posted abroad had to start carrying guns, and to take many other steps to tighten the security in the environments in which they lived and worked.<sup>223</sup> More generally, a Turkish political scientist argued that the attacks made it impossible to talk reasonably about the Armenian question in Turkey, because if anyone wanted to try to explain why these people were assassinating Turkish diplomats and what they were talking about, s/he would be accused of sympathizing with terrorists.<sup>224</sup> Echoing this point, in 1982 Selçuk Bakkalbaşı, who was the press counsellor at the

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<sup>218</sup> A few small splinter groups claimed responsibility for some of these terrorist attacks, but the vast majority were claimed by ASALA or JCAG. Media and governmental discussions of these attacks typically refer monolithically to ASALA (and less often to JCAG) in identifying those responsible for the terrorism, and in Turkey the spate of Armenian terrorism is sometimes referred to overall as *ASALA terörü* (ASALA terror).

<sup>219</sup> N.B.: I have read varying reports of the number of diplomats killed in Armenian terrorist attacks: Öktem writes that 36 Turkish diplomats were assassinated (2011: 76). Mete Tunçay mentions in an essay that 34 Turkish diplomats were killed in these attacks (2008: 240). See <http://www.belgenet.com/arsiv/ermeniteror.html> for a list of the terrorist attacks and assassinations that targeted Turkish diplomats in the 1970s and 1980s.

<sup>220</sup> Özdemir reports that a book published in 2000 by a former Turkish official related the fact that, following a bomb attack on a Turkish target in London in 1980, when a BBC reporter asked him what he thought about the Armenian Genocide, he had no idea what to say, because he had no prior knowledge about the topic and the Turkish government had not prepared officials posted abroad to answer questions about it (2008: 60).

<sup>221</sup> For example, a Turkish academic argued that the start of Armenian terrorist attacks against Turkish targets was the key point of change for this issue in Turkey. He said that when the first assassination of Turkish diplomats occurred in 1973, the issue was raised for him, as for most other Turks. Moreover, he emphasized that most Turks did not know anything about the Armenian deportations and massacres before the Armenian terrorist attacks began, so this was their introduction to the issue (Author’s interview with a Turkish political scientist [T-27], Ankara, May 2008). On the impact of this terrorism, see also: Bloxham 2005: 219; Göçek 2011: 52-6, 151-3; Foss 1992: 269-270; Bayraktar 2005. For quasi-official publications that directly address Armenian terrorism, see: Lütem 2008; Şimşir 2000.

<sup>222</sup> Author’s interview with foreign diplomat [T-7], Ankara, April 2008.

<sup>223</sup> Author’s interview with Turkish academic [T-11], Istanbul, March 2009.

<sup>224</sup> Author’s interview with a Turkish political scientist [T-27], Ankara, May 2008.

Turkish embassy in Paris, observed that: “Ten years ago we could have admitted there was some kind of massacre, but for some reason the Government decided not to. Now it’s too late. Who can bend to the demands of terrorists?” (Davidian and Ferchl 1982).<sup>225</sup> Furthermore, beyond the psychological impact of these attacks on the agents of the official narrative, Ülgen argues that the terror attacks fed directly into latent elements of the official narrative, giving Turkish officials concrete, contemporary ‘evidence’ of the violence of Armenians. She writes that: “ASALA’s actions helped reify the image of the Armenians as ‘terrorists’ who were trying to convert the entire Anatolia into a ‘bomb arsenal.’ ASALA helped fortify and reify the narratives of Turkish nationalist self-righteousness and victimhood monumentalized during the Republican era” (2010: 464).<sup>226</sup>

#### International recognition efforts: “Plots hatched against Turkey”<sup>227</sup>

The 1970s marked the first signs of concerted political efforts by Armenians (and others) to get states and international organizations to recognize the genocide.<sup>228</sup> In 1971, the UN Commission on Human Rights’ Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities commissioned a report on genocide. When a draft of this report was submitted in 1973,<sup>229</sup> paragraph 30 of the report read, “‘Passing to the modern era, one may note the existence of relatively full documentation dealing with the massacres of Armenians, which have been described as ‘the first case of genocide’ in the twentieth century’” (Fine 1985). Over the next few years, however, Turkey lobbied to get this paragraph removed from the report, and succeeded with the support of the representatives of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt and Afghanistan.<sup>230</sup> As a result, “when the revised version of the report was presented in 1978, the historical section began with the Nazi destruction of the Jews” (Smith 1992: 11).<sup>231</sup>

After the struggle over this UN report, however, attention to the issue did not recede. Instead, Armenians continued to draw attention to the issue and increasingly raised their voices in protest at omissions like this. For example, in a case of what Keck and Sikkink term ‘accountability

<sup>225</sup> It should be noted that Bakkalbaşı was wounded in an attack by Armenian terrorists on 26 September 1980 (i.e., two years prior to this interview), and was partially paralyzed as a result.

<sup>226</sup> Göçek makes a similar point, writing that the “Turkish society, which at this point had no knowledge of the past injustices committed against the Armenians, was suddenly introduced to a stereotypical image of the Armenians as ‘terrorists who murdered innocent diplomats’. The Turkish populace therefore quickly believed and internalized the Turkish state’s newly constructed justification that these recent Armenian actions were merely a continuation of the rebellious violence the Armenians had committed in the past against the Ottoman state” (2011: 152).

<sup>227</sup> This is from a statement made by the Turkish Foreign Ministry Under Secretary, Ambassador Nüzhet Kandemir, to diplomatic representatives of the 10 EC member-states. This statement was made in response to the European Parliament’s June 1987 passage of a resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide. Among the comments that Kandemir made to these envoys, was that “the reference to such issues [“as Cyprus, Turkish-Greek relations, democracy, and minorities,” along with the “forced emigration” of Armenians] clearly exposes the plots hatched against Turkey and the persons hiding behind these plots” (*Ankara Domestic Service* 1987d).

<sup>228</sup> Bloxham 2005: 215; Libaridian 2004: 191; Bobelian 2009: 164-206.

<sup>229</sup> This draft report was doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/L.583 (Van Boven 1985: 168).

<sup>230</sup> Author’s interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-8], Istanbul, April 2009.

<sup>231</sup> The reasons that the Special Rapporteur who had prepared and revised the report gave for deleting the reference to the Armenian Genocide and to a few other historical cases, were “because it was impossible to compile an exhaustive list, because it was important to maintain unity within the international community in regard to genocide, and because in many cases to delve into the past might re-open old wounds which were now healing” (Van Boven 1985: 170).

politics' (1998: 24-5), Hovannisian writes that "when the Turkish measures to erase even the memory of the Armenian victims in a draft report of a United Nations subcommission became known, the story spread swiftly throughout the Armenian communities. Armenian groups around the world now mounted their own campaign, publicly invoking the human rights declarations of several member states of the UN Human Rights Commission" (1986: 128). And in 1975, several political parties in the Armenian diaspora together submitted a proposal to the UN that "demanded 'the return of Turkish-held Armenian territories to their rightful owner – the Armenian people', along with 'moral, financial and territorial reparations'" (European Stability Initiative 2009: 24). Moreover, Armenians began to form research institutes and political organizations in the 1970s and 1980s, which gave organizational backing to the increasing scope and goals of their protests.<sup>232</sup> As a result, the issue grew to be an increasingly vexing problem for Turkey's diplomats in the 1980s and beyond. In particular, the deletion of paragraph 30 was not the final action by the UN subcommittee. In response to the debate and subsequent protests of Armenians and others over the deletion of paragraph 30, in 1983 the UN Commission for Human Rights assigned an independent "special rapporteur" to study the events of 1915 and ascertain whether the term 'genocide' was applicable and appropriate (Fine 1985). The report, which was prepared by the independent human rights advocate Benjamin Whitaker and released in 1985, concluded that the events of 1915 constituted a case of genocide (Whitaker 1985).

Equally troublingly for Turkey, the issue was brought up in a proposed resolution in the United States Congress in 1975.<sup>233</sup> The US House of Representatives debated a resolution to commemorate the Armenian Genocide, which would have designated April 24, 1975 as a "National Day of Remembrance of Man's Inhumanity to Man."<sup>234</sup> While this resolution passed in the House of Representatives, it was not voted on by the Senate. Turkey had lobbied strongly against the resolution, and as a result, both the US State Department and the Ford administration opposed its passage.<sup>235</sup> Nevertheless, this resolution marked the first round of a still-ongoing political struggle over this issue in the US Congress, and one to which Turkey is particularly sensitive, given the power of the US and its close relationship with Turkey.

To the dismay of Turkish officials, in April 1981, US President Ronald Reagan referred to the events of 1915 as a genocide.<sup>236</sup> This was the only time in post-WWII US history that a sitting President used the term 'genocide' to refer to these events. This position was swiftly reversed, however, presumably as a result of Turkey's diplomatic efforts. Thus in 1982, the State Department noted in a report on Armenian terrorism that appeared in a regular State Department

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<sup>232</sup> In 1972 the Armenian Assembly was formed. As a "non-partisan organization dedicated to promoting public understanding and awareness of Armenian issues," the Assembly has been involved in efforts "to secure universal reaffirmation of the Armenian Genocide" (Armenian Assembly of America). The non-profit Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation was established in 1982 in Cambridge, Massachusetts and was incorporated in 1984 in Toronto. The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) has roots that extend back to the immediate post-WWI period. Today, ANCA operates as a political organization that lobbies in Washington on behalf of "the concerns of the Armenian American community on a broad range of issues," including political efforts aimed at "ensuring the appropriate commemoration of the Armenian Genocide" (ANCA).

<sup>233</sup> Prior to 1975, there had been previous attempts to pass such a resolution in the US Congress, but they had all failed (Bobelian 2009: 166).

<sup>234</sup> For the text of the draft resolution, see: [http://www.anca.org/genocide\\_resource/recognition.php](http://www.anca.org/genocide_resource/recognition.php), accessed on 26 May 2011.

<sup>235</sup> Bloxham 2005: 218; Bobelian 2009: 167-8; Lewy 2005: 259-260.

<sup>236</sup> See: [http://www.anca.org/genocide\\_resource/reagan.php](http://www.anca.org/genocide_resource/reagan.php), accessed on 26 May 2011.

bulletin that: “Because the historical record of the 1915 events in Asia Minor is ambiguous, the Department of State has not endorsed allegations that the Turkish Government committed a genocide against the Armenian people” (Corsun 1982: 34).<sup>237</sup>

Moreover, throughout the 1980s the nascent trend toward international recognition of the Armenian Genocide developed further. During this period, the United States considered legislative recognitions that would have recognized the genocide several times. While the resolutions considered in 1984-5, in 1987, and in 1989-90 all failed to pass both houses of Congress, they focused unwanted attention on this issue for Turkey, both domestically and internationally. Outside of the US, the Armenian Genocide was recognized in the UN-commissioned Whitaker report, and in a non-binding, independent judicial decision by the Permanent People’s Tribunal in 1984.<sup>238</sup> Finally, in June 1987 the European Parliament (EP) passed a resolution acknowledging the Armenian Genocide. While the resolution passed with only a minority of votes of the members of the parliament (since many did not show up for the vote, while others abstained from casting a vote), the resolution was particularly galling to Turkey, especially as it came in the context of the EC’s process of considering Turkey’s first formal application for membership in the Community. The resolution declared:

“the refusal by the present Turkish Government to acknowledge the genocide against the Armenian people committed by the Young Turk government, its reluctance to apply the principles of international law to its differences of opinion with Greece, the maintenance of Turkish occupation forces in Cyprus and the denial of existence of the Kurdish question, together with the lack of true parliamentary democracy and the failure to respect individual and collective freedoms, in particular freedom of religion, in that country are insurmountable obstacles to consideration of the possibility of Turkey’s accession to the Community”<sup>239</sup>

As I discuss below, the conjuncture of these events, especially the terror attacks, finally led Turkish officials to reconsider the strategies they used to defend their position, and to lift the shroud of silence from the official narrative. Before I outline the nature of these changes, however, let me briefly describe key aspects of the broader domestic and international political contexts.

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<sup>237</sup> In response to this statement, a young Armenian-American lawyer, Van Krikorian, filed a Freedom of Information Act request for State Department documents to find out why this seeming policy change had been made. When some documents were withheld in response to his request, he filed an administrative appeal and later a civil suit against the State Department. The case ended in a 1993 Appeals Court ruling that the statement in the bulletin had “contradicted longstanding United States policy” regarding the genocide. On this, see: Bobelian 2009: 169; Adalian 1996. For the 1993 ruling by the US Court of Appeals from the District of Columbia, from which the quote above is taken, see: [http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.241/current\\_category.76/affirmation\\_detail.html](http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.241/current_category.76/affirmation_detail.html), accessed on 24 June 2011.

<sup>238</sup> On the verdict by and testimonies before the Permanent People’s Tribunal, see: Libaridian 1985.

<sup>239</sup> See: [http://www.anca.org/genocide\\_resource/recognition.php](http://www.anca.org/genocide_resource/recognition.php), accessed on 26 May 2011.



## *The context before and during Phase Two*

### The international context

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Cold War continued, which meant that there was little pressure from Soviet Armenia on the issue of the genocide. More importantly, Turkey's alliance with the United States, and its prominent military role in NATO, was a factor that continued to militate against competing international pressure to recognize the genocide.

In terms of Turkey's foreign policies in this period, two factors deserve mention. One was Turkey's relationship with Greece and its invasion of Cyprus. In the first several decades after WWI, Turkey's relations with Greece were stable, but they became strained over the issue of Cyprus from the mid-1950s, with relations particularly fraying in 1964 and again in 1967. The issue came to a head in 1974, when the Greek military government supported a coup on the island of Cyprus and announced the unification of the independent Cyprus with Greece. In response, the Turkish military invaded and established control over the northern part of the island (Zürcher 1998: 248-9, 289-90), which violated the scope of its permissible actions under existing UN resolutions. The international community condemned Turkey's actions, and the Turkish-controlled northern zone of the island has remained as a problem for Turkey, Greece and now the European Union. This event strained Turkey's relationship with the United States, particularly as the US Congress imposed sanctions on the sale of arms to Turkey in response to its invasion (Zürcher 1998: 290; Kirişçi 1998). Moreover, the failed coup heightened Turkey's paranoia about Greek intentions, while the largely unsympathetic international responses to Turkey's invasion and occupation of the island reinforced the perception, especially among the Turkish military, that Turkey was surrounded by enemies and had to be vigilant to protect its interests.

Finally, as mentioned above, Turkey submitted its first application for membership in the European Community in 1987, and it was rejected in 1989. This was unsurprising, given the recent military coup, the international allegations and documentation of the military regime's extensive use of torture against political prisoners, and the growing human rights discourse within the community and in Europe more broadly. In announcing its decision in 1989, "The European Commission ... recommended the operationalization of the Association Agreement instead of opening accession negotiations at that time, even though it noted Turkey's eligibility for membership" (Müftüler-Baç 2005: 20). Thus, while Turkey had had an Association Agreement with the EEC dating back to 1963, this application marked a new step in Turkey's relations with the Community, but one that was a harbinger of the unusually drawn-out and uncertain process of Turkey's EU membership candidacy.

### The domestic context

Domestically, the legal constraints on freedom of speech, the continuing taboo on the discussion of the Armenian question, and the continued 'othering' and questioning of the loyalty of non-Muslim minorities were structural continuities that severely constrained domestic challenges to the official narrative. Highlighting the continued lack of internal questioning of the official narrative, the sociologist Mehmet Necef writes,

“As the Turkish historian Taner Akcam notes [(1995: 31)], the most suggestive illustration of the silence of the Turkish intellectuals is probably the fact that there is no mention of the tragic events of 1915 in the volumes of *The Encyclopaedia of Socialism and Social Struggles* [that was published in 1988-9] which is published by a progressive publishing house and having Turkey’s most prominent critical, progressive and socialist intellectuals as its authors” (2003: 227).

In addition, two domestic developments influenced the timing and the content of the changes in the this phase: the political violence and paralysis of the late 1970s, and the military coup of 12 September 1980, which brought a halt to the political turmoil and returned Turkey’s generals to power for three years.

In the late 1970s, there was a series of short-lived coalition governments, each of which made little progress addressing a growing financial crisis and increasing violence between leftists and right-wing paramilitary groups in Turkey’s cities. Zürcher writes that “the number of victims of political violence rose quickly: from around 230 in 1977 ... to between 1200 and 1500 two years later” (1998: 276). In addition, the oil crises of the 1970s, combined with failed import-substitution policies of the 60s and 70s, had led to skyrocketing inflation and a looming financial collapse (Zürcher 1998: 278-282).

On 12 September 1980, the military again overthrew the civilian government, this time in response to the political turmoil, economic crisis and political violence of the late 1970s.<sup>240</sup> This third coup within twenty years dramatically altered the Turkish political landscape. The coup demolished the political left in Turkey and introduced a new regime and a new constitution. Both the regime and the 1982 constitution were conservative and undemocratic, and imposed much tighter controls on public life and public discourse. Moreover, in the wake of the coup, many leftists and intellectuals were purged from political life, and the military regime imprisoned thousands of politically-active leftists and Kurds. This weakening of Turkey’s democracy and freedoms buttressed the continued lack of internal questioning of the official narrative.

At the same time, political and social pressures for unity and homogenization continued within Turkey, both in the context of discussions about the Armenian question and in relation to other issues, especially the Kurdish question. As part of this, Armenians’ (and other minority groups’) loyalty as Turkish citizens continued to be called into question by the state and by myriad commentators in Turkey. For example, in a column in the Turkish newspaper *Hürriyet* in 1981, a journalist called on Turkish Armenian citizens to learn from “our Jewish compatriots in Turkey” and to show their “patriotic loyalty” by taking action and showing awareness to defend the Turkish nation against the “villainy of their kinsmen in other countries” (Faik 1981).<sup>241</sup> Moreover, Turkish-Armenians clearly perceived the need to demonstrate their loyalty, highlighted by the fact that the Armenian patriarch publicly denounced Armenian terror attacks

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<sup>240</sup> On the coup, see: Zürcher 1998: 276-7, 280-2; Findley 2010: 317-21.

<sup>241</sup> Similarly, in December 1987, the prominent Turkish journalist Mehmet Ali Birand wrote a column titled “A Task for Our Jewish Citizens and Israel,” in which he called on Turkish Jews and Israel to work with Jewish groups in the United States to prevent “Armenian claims” from being included “in the ‘genocide memorial’ to be erected in Washington” [i.e., in the Holocaust Museum]. Göçek (2011: 54-5, 152) and Hovannisian (1986: 129) also note this trend.

and disavowed any affiliation with the terrorists on several occasions (e.g., Howe 1983).<sup>242</sup> These pressures further prevented potential challenges to the official narrative from arising within Turkey.

In 1984 the Kurdish insurgency in Turkey's southeast emerged into full view,<sup>243</sup> leading to Kurdish terrorist attacks within Turkey, massive rural depopulation in the region, an escalating death toll (among civilians, insurgents and Turkish soldiers), and the military's declaration of a state of emergency in ten provinces in southeastern Turkey in 1987.<sup>244</sup> Thus while Armenian terrorist attacks ended in the mid-1980s, they were replaced by attacks by the Workers' Party of Kurdistan (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*, PKK), which began in 1984. Consequently, from the perspective of Turkey's leaders and citizens there was no let-up in terrorism.

Finally, the 1980s were a period of dramatic economic and social change in Turkey. The Turkish government shifted from import substitution policies to export-led development in the 1980s, following a decade of economic stagnation that was brought about in part by the world oil crises in the 1970s. This change in economic policy led to "annual growth rates of more than 5 per cent," a decrease in inflation "from three-digit rates to one," and a "sevenfold rise in Turkish exports from just below US\$3 billion at the beginning of the 1980s to US\$20 billion at their end" (Öktem 2011: 69). This growth also facilitated the creation of a new middle class and an *Islamic* bourgeoisie in Turkey. These so-called 'Anatolian tigers,' which benefited from the economic policies of the 1980s, would form the economic and social basis for the growing Islamic political movement, from which the ruling AKP emerged in the early 2000s (Göçek 2011: 32, 168).<sup>245</sup> Importantly for our story, these new elites were different from the secular political and economic elites, since the former were not beholden to the state and its Kemalist ideology in the way that these older elites were and are.

*The dependent variable: "Too much history has been left in darkness"*<sup>246</sup>

As these pressures were beginning to accumulate in the late 1970s, Turkish politicians and officials were consumed by the country's domestic political turmoil and preoccupied with ongoing issues related to the military's 1974 invasion of Cyprus. As a result, despite these new

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<sup>242</sup> While Turkish officials sometimes emphasized to domestic audiences that Armenians *outside* Turkey, *not* Armenians in Turkey, were responsible for the terror attacks (e.g., *Istanbul Güneş* 1985), such claims were undermined by the constant questioning of Armenians' loyalty by state actors as well as by others within Turkey.

<sup>243</sup> It is important to note that, following the 1980 coup, the military's crackdown on and widespread imprisonment of Kurds (especially in the notorious Diyarbakır prison) is argued to have contributed to the development of the Workers' Party of Kurdistan by alienating and radicalizing a much wider portion of the Kurdish population (Öktem 2011: 64-6). Moreover, Göçek notes that, "as the Turkish army violently repressed all other leftist and Kurdish movements within the country [in the wake of the 1980 coup], the PKK – which had managed to survive by leaving Turkey – ended up emerging as the only credible Kurdish challenger to the state" (2011: 44).

<sup>244</sup> Illustrating the scope of the military's engagement in this internal conflict, Findley writes that, "by the early 1990s, two hundred thousand troops were stationed in the region" (2010: 366).

<sup>245</sup> For a brief overview of the emergence of AKP, see: Özbudun 2006.

<sup>246</sup> This quote is taken from a statement made in May 1989 by the Director-General of the Prime Minister's State Archives, İsmet Miroğlu, following the 'opening' of the archives related to the Armenian question. He said: "Let anyone come, let the Armenian researchers come. Too much history has been left in darkness" (Pope 1989).

pressures, there were no notable changes in Turkey's narrative in the 1970s.<sup>247</sup> Instead, the Turkish government's initial responses were primarily reactive.<sup>248</sup> In the 1970s, the main responses to the terror attacks were security- and intelligence-related, involving the National Intelligence Organization (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilâtı*, MİT), the military, and the diplomatic corps. These responses focused on: condemnation of the terrorist attacks, denial of the veracity of genocide claims,<sup>249</sup> and heightening of security measures for Turkish diplomats and government agents working abroad.<sup>250</sup> One Turkish diplomat commented that when Armenian lobbying started to get the issue of the Armenian Genocide considered in the United States (in 1975) and in the United Nations (in 1973), Turkey was not at all prepared to respond. For example, Göçek writes that "as these unjust assassinations [by Armenian terrorist organizations] made their way to the Western courts and public prosecutors requested information on what had happened in 1915 for legal purposes, there was not at the Turkish Foreign Ministry a single thorough English-language text depicting the Turkish state's version of 1915 that could be sent to these courts" (2011: 53).<sup>251</sup> Instead, Turkey responded to situations and tried to control outcomes as they arose in international bodies,<sup>252</sup> and Turkish diplomats continued their efforts to oppose any reference to Armenian claims internationally.<sup>253</sup> This strategy was somewhat successful, in that it led to the deletion of the paragraph from the final version of the UN report and prevented the 1975 Congressional resolution being brought to a vote on the floor of the Senate. Ultimately, however, this strategy was unsuccessful, as international attention and references to the issue continued to *increase* in the 1970s,<sup>254</sup> which also brought unwanted domestic attention to the issue within Turkey.

The 1980 military coup marked the point of change in the official narrative, offering both the political opportunity and the ideational commitment to re-think the official approach to the

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<sup>247</sup> One interviewee implied that these factors prevented the Turkish government from effectively responding to the Armenian terror attacks and international claims of genocide in the mid- to late-1970s (Author's interview with Turkish researcher [T-9], Ankara, April 2008).

<sup>248</sup> While I do not agree with the first point in this passage, it is interesting to note that the Deputy Foreign Minister Kamuran Gürün refers to the formerly "passive" nature of Turkish efforts prior to the early 1980s in his book *The Armenian File*. He writes: "We can easily say that propaganda is one of the weakest points of Turks. This was so in the Ottoman Empire, as well as in the Turkish republic. The propaganda activity of Turks has been restricted to refuting articles and erroneous assertions; thus it has been nothing more than a passive effort to defend the Turkish position. This attitude enabled the opposite side to act freely in portraying Turks as being guilty" (1985: 36).

<sup>249</sup> Hovannisian notes that in the 1970s, Turkish officials took some initial steps toward changing the ways in which they argued against the genocide claims. He writes that "pamphlets and brochures sent out from Ankara to foreign countries were mostly reprints of the Turkish publications first issued between 1917 and 1919 and intended to cast blame for Armenian troubles on the Armenians themselves and ... to minimize the Ottoman losses" (1986: 122).

<sup>250</sup> Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-8], Istanbul, April 2009. According to him, as the terror attacks continued against Turkish targets, Turkish embassies and diplomats took more and more measures to deter terrorists. As these preventative security measures got more sophisticated, and as Turkish diplomats were more aware of the threat of attacks, the number of attacks decreased. This is supported by the retired Turkish Ambassador Lütem's account, which emphasizes that in the period between 1973 and 1980, the Turkish government's responses to the escalating terrorist attacks were focused on increasing security measures (2008: 37-8).

<sup>251</sup> In making this point, Göçek cites Şimşir (2000 (vol. I): 108).

<sup>252</sup> Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-8], Istanbul, April 2009.

<sup>253</sup> See: *Los Angeles Times* 1973; Smith 1992: 11; Bobelian 2009.

<sup>254</sup> The increasing international and media attention to the "Armenian claims" angered Turkish officials, who complained about it in the 1980s. For example, a *New York Times* article in February 1980 quoted a Turkish diplomat, who remarked "resentfully" that " 'Everytime a Turkish diplomat gets killed, the Western press talks about revenge and digs into the old files on the 'Armenian massacre' " (Howe 1980).

Armenian question. The crackdown on domestic dissent following the coup quieted domestic turmoil and halted the political turnovers that had characterized Turkish politics in the 1970s (Öktem 2011: 59-60), thus allowing Turkish officials turn their attention to the growing international criticism of their position on the Armenian question. Moreover, one interviewee emphasized that the policy changes in the early 1980s vis-à-vis the Armenian question are in part attributable to the fact that the military, which was in power from 1980-83, is more sensitive about this issue than other institutions.<sup>255</sup> As the self-appointed guardian of Atatürk's legacy, and as the institution from which both Atatürk and the CUP leaders who planned the genocide and organized the national resistance movement emerged, the military has shown its strong commitment to preserving the *unsullied* memory of Atatürk and of the national resistance movement, and the indivisible unity of the Turkish nation and territory. Consequently, in the early 1980s, the official narrative of the Armenian Genocide changed significantly, along with the ways in which the Turkish state communicated its narrative and responded to challenges.<sup>256</sup>

Strategies to support the official narrative in Phase Two: "Tell[ing] the world the truth"<sup>257</sup>

Beginning in 1981, Turkish officials – particularly those in the National Security Council and in the Foreign Ministry – developed a coherent set of strategies to get "the truth" out, both to citizens and to other countries.<sup>258</sup> This set of strategies involved five elements: centralizing control over the official narrative, publishing defenses of the official narrative, marshalling evidence to support the official narrative, teaching the official narrative to Turkish students and citizens, and gaining international support for the official narrative.<sup>259</sup> Importantly, a number of Turkish officials and bureaucratic institutions were involved in these activities, reflecting the importance accorded to defending the official narrative. In addition, within Turkey, officials solicited the help of retired diplomats and military officers, as well as societal actors in universities, think tanks and elsewhere. Abroad, Turkish officials skillfully cultivated the help of a variety of groups, especially in the United States.

<sup>255</sup> Author's interview with Turkish researcher [T-9], Ankara, April 2008.

<sup>256</sup> In addition, Göçek argues that "in 1980, the Turkish military launched a covert paramilitary organization to track down and murder the Turkish diplomats' Armenian assassins" (2011: 53-4). I do not have further substantiating information about this, nor is it an explicit part of the official *narrative*, so I just note this point here in passing.

<sup>257</sup> In a public speech delivered in Erzurum in July 1986, the Turkish President Kenan Evren argued that the reason why Turkey was being characterized as "a nation that has committed massacres" was because "we have not been able to tell the world the truth" (*Ankara Domestic Service* 1986).

<sup>258</sup> Özdemir reports that, "from the beginning of the year 1981, studies were begun in the Secretariat of the National Security Council with respect to the things that would be possible to do in order to counter the Armenian claims" (2008: 66 – my translation). During the period of military rule in the early 1980s, the National Security Council was the central ruling body. The timing of the change as a function of the coup is also confirmed in the account of the retired Turkish Ambassador Ömer Engin Lütem, who was involved in planning and organizing these activities in the early 1980s (2008: 38-9).

<sup>259</sup> Lütem reports: "The National Security Council, which was the highest organization of the state during this military regime, discussed 'the State Politics about the Struggle against the Armenians' in its August 28, 1991 summit. [N.B.: The date is a typo; it should read 1981.] Foreign Minister İlder Türkmen, the General Secretary of the Foreign Ministry Kamuran Gürün, and me [i.e., Lütem], as the related Director General of the Ministry [of Foreign Affairs], held a meeting, whose general outline of the accepted policies can be summarized as: To announce the historical incidents to the public opinions in a totally objective way in order to refute Armenian claims; to persuade the Armenian communities who were living in foreign countries to be against Armenian terrorist actions; to try to dissuade some countries from supporting extremist Armenians; and lastly, to take some protectionist precautions against Armenian attacks" (2008: 38-9).

## Centralizing control over the official narrative

One of the first steps taken was to create a central coordinating committee. The committee, which was called the Information and Planning Coordination Committee (*İstihbarat ve Planlama Koordinasyon Kurulu*), was established under the direction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1981.<sup>260</sup> In addition, a special unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also created in 1981. This unit was called the Directorate General of Intelligence and Research (*İstihbarat ve Araştırma Genel Müdürlüğü*, İAGM), and its primary task was to conduct research and produce scholarship on the Armenian question.<sup>261</sup> İAGM's first head was Ömer Engin Lütem, and its work was closely overseen by the Deputy Foreign Minister Kamuran Gürün. After the creation of İAGM and the coordinating committee, the Armenian question was handled in a centralized place within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in coordination with the military.<sup>262</sup> Subsequently, İAGM worked with other government agencies – especially the military, the archives, and universities – to produce and distribute evidence supporting the official narrative.<sup>263</sup>

## Publishing defenses of the official narrative

Beginning in 1981, Turkish officials began to work on and support the publication of books that articulated the Turkish government's narrative and which aimed at "invalidating the claims of 'genocide'" (Lütem 2008: 39).<sup>264</sup> As a first step, officials wanted to publish a book that was both "academic/scientific and documentary" (Özdemir 2008: 66 – my translation) and that would explain the issue both to Turks and to the world (*Ibid.*: 67). In so doing, officials had two goals in mind: to get out the Turkish government's position, since it has been largely silent on the issue to this point, and to discredit key elements of the 'Armenian claims.' At first, İAGM and the National Security Council tried to encourage Turkish historians to conduct research on and to write about the Armenian question. This did not work out, although it is not clear from available sources whether the Turkish historians who were consulted by government officials did not have the requisite knowledge to write on the topic, or demurred because they did not want to do so. Regardless, the Turkish diplomats who were working on the issue decided to undertake the work

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<sup>260</sup> According to Özdemir's account (2008: 67), the committee was proposed by Deputy Foreign Minister Kâmuran Gürün, and was accepted by two of the ruling junta's leaders, Generals Kenan Evren and Haydar Saltık.

<sup>261</sup> Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24a], Ankara, May 2008; Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24b], Ankara, March 2009; Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-8], Istanbul, April 2009. See also: Lütem 2008: 38. Interestingly, this unit was modeled on a research and intelligence unit within the US State Department. At some point in the 1990s, the name of this unit was changed to the Security Affairs Directorate (*Güvenlik İşleri Genel Müdürlüğü*), which is its current name. According to one interviewee, this unit was created at the suggestion of the military officer who headed the MGK's Intelligence Department, which was dealing with the Armenian question, but for which there was no counterpart unit within the MFA with whom the Turkish military could effectively cooperate on this issue (Author's interview [T-10], Istanbul, April 2009).

<sup>262</sup> Author's interview [T-10], Istanbul, April 2009; Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24b], Ankara, March 2009. According to one interviewee, prior to the creation of İAGM, Armenian affairs was dealt with by a number of different departments within the MFA. E.g., if there were an Armenian terrorist attack in France, those who worked on French politics would work on it. If there were an Armenian terrorist attack in Lebanon, the desk that covered Lebanon would work on it, etc.

<sup>263</sup> Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-8], Istanbul, April 2009; Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-31], Istanbul, April 2009.

<sup>264</sup> Gürün also notes that this effort began in 1981 (1985: 209).

themselves, which resulted in the publication of a handful of important books and pamphlets written by Turkish diplomats in the early 1980s.<sup>265</sup>

One of the first of these books<sup>266</sup> – *Ermeni Dosyası* [The Armenian File] – was written by the Deputy Foreign Minister Kamuran Gürün and was first published in Turkish in 1983.<sup>267</sup> And while a few official publications on the Armenian question came out before Gürün's, his was arguably the most important one written in the early 1980s.<sup>268</sup> The book has a straightforward tone, and extensively quotes passages from contemporaneous accounts and scholarly works. The book attempts to contextualize and historically ground the Armenian question, covering WWI and the "relocation" of Armenians in just one of six chapters, with the "relocation" directly addressed in about twenty pages. Gürün presents the "relocation" – which is the term he uses – as arising from the self-interested interventions of the great powers into minority affairs in the Ottoman Empire, from the rebellions and terrorist activities of Armenian nationalists, from the widespread attacks and insurrections by Armenians at the beginning of WWI, and from Armenians' traitorous cooperation with Turkey's enemy Russia. Quoting Talat, Gürün argues that the deportation was a "military requirement" (1985: 214). He further insists that "it was impossible to adopt a better solution under the circumstances" (*Ibid.*: 216). Perhaps the most interesting argument that Gürün makes is that Armenians were at war with Turks (*Ibid.*: 215) and that "Armenians were forced to emigrate because they had joined the ranks of the enemy" (*Ibid.*: 216). In terms of figures, he claims that 702,900 Armenians were deported and no more than 300,000 died during WWI (*Ibid.*: 217). Finally, the last sentence of the last chapter (aside from a 1.5-page-long conclusion), closes with this assertion: "Today, no one has the right to make any kind of demand from Turkey about the events occurring before the signing of the Lausanne Treaty" (*Ibid.*: 295). This assertion reflects Turkish officials' concern about the territorial claims that were being made by Armenian terrorists and by some Armenian groups.

At the same time, Lütem writes that "the other decision taken ... was to publish booklets and brochures which explained the Armenian problem in a brief way in order to let everybody understand the issue" (2008: 39). Thus, government officials wrote a manual about the Armenian question that offered a quick overview of the issue and refuted accusations against Turkey. The manual, which was titled "The Armenian Question in Nine Questions and Answers," was

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<sup>265</sup> Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24a], Ankara, May 2008; Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24b], Ankara, March 2009. On this, Ömer Engin Lütem writes: "The National Security Council decided initially to write a book ... about the claims of Armenians in order to apply the state policy. This book had to be composed by Turkish historians. After the meeting of the historians on December 18, 1981 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ankara, it was understood that they were not able to draft such a book in a short period of time. Thus, Kamuran Gürün, the General Secretary of the Foreign Ministry, who was already studied [in] the subject matter, undertook the task of writing the book" (2008: 39). Moreover, Özdemir quotes Gürün, who later admitted that he had written the first book because officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs perceived that "academics in Turkey did not know about this topic" [i.e., about the Armenian question] (2008: 69, my translation, quoting from Gürün 1984b: 32), and because the academics that met with officials in the Foreign Ministry were reluctant to undertake this project themselves (Özdemir 2008: 70).

<sup>266</sup> Another early book on the topic was by Bilâl Şimşir, who was also a diplomat. This book was: Bilâl Şimşir, *The Genesis of the Armenian Question* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 1982a [1984; 2003]).

<sup>267</sup> The book was published in French in 1984 and in English in 1985.

<sup>268</sup> The importance of Gürün's book was emphasized by several interviewees (Author's interview with a Turkish political scientist [T-27], Ankara, May 2008; Author's interview with Turkish academic [T-11], Istanbul, March 2009).

published in 1982 in Turkish, English, Spanish and French by an Ankara-based think tank called the Foreign Policy Institute (*Dış Politika Enstitüsü*). While the publisher was not a government agency, this manual was conceived by diplomats and military officers, and written by a group of diplomats in the MFA.<sup>269</sup> Of the nine questions asked and answered in this manual, three deal with questions about Armenian claims to Turkish territory, and three deal with claims that Turks systematically massacred Armenians during World War I. This manual asserts that no Armenians were massacred by Turks during the war (Foreign Policy Institute 1985: 24), that extant estimates of the number of Armenians that died are “highly exaggerated” because they exceed the prewar Armenian population (*Ibid.*: 29), and that those who died did so from “famine, sickness, contagious diseases, severe climatic conditions and actual combat” (*Ibid.*: 30).<sup>270</sup> Notably, the first two questions address territorial claims,<sup>271</sup> which is another indication of the importance of this issue for Turkish officials.

In an overall reflection of official efforts to publish materials on this topic, a number of government agencies published books on the Armenian question in the early 1980s. Figure 4.1 (below) shows that in the two five-year periods in the 1980s, the total number of official and quasi-official publications<sup>272</sup> on the Armenian question skyrocketed: from one book published between 1976 and 1980, to 21 books published between 1981 and 1985. This increase is particularly stark when compared to the previous decades, in which only a few books were published on the topic, primarily by the quasi-official Turkish Historical Society and by the military archives.<sup>273</sup> Also in contrast to the prior phase, a greater number of government agencies issued publications on the Armenian question: In addition to the TTK and the military archives, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (*Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı*), and the Office of the Prime Minister’s Directorate General of Press and Information (*Başbakanlık Basın-Yayın ve Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü*) published books on the topic.<sup>274</sup> Finally, it is important to note that many of the official and quasi-official publications in this phase were either written in or translated into English (and often also into French), which reveals that these publications were aimed at Turkish citizens *and* foreign audiences.

<sup>269</sup> Author’s interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24b], Ankara, March 2009. Özdemir also reports that Gürün and other officials working on a task force on the Armenian question decided to put together and publish a brief brochure that would address likely questions about the Armenian question. Although he does not mention the title of the publication, it seems to be this one (2008: 73). The Foreign Policy Institute published another booklet on the topic in this period, which I suspect was also coordinated and written by İAGM. This booklet was published in Turkish, English, French and German within the same year.

<sup>270</sup> Note that my discussion of the content of the manual is based on the 1985 (3<sup>rd</sup> edition.)

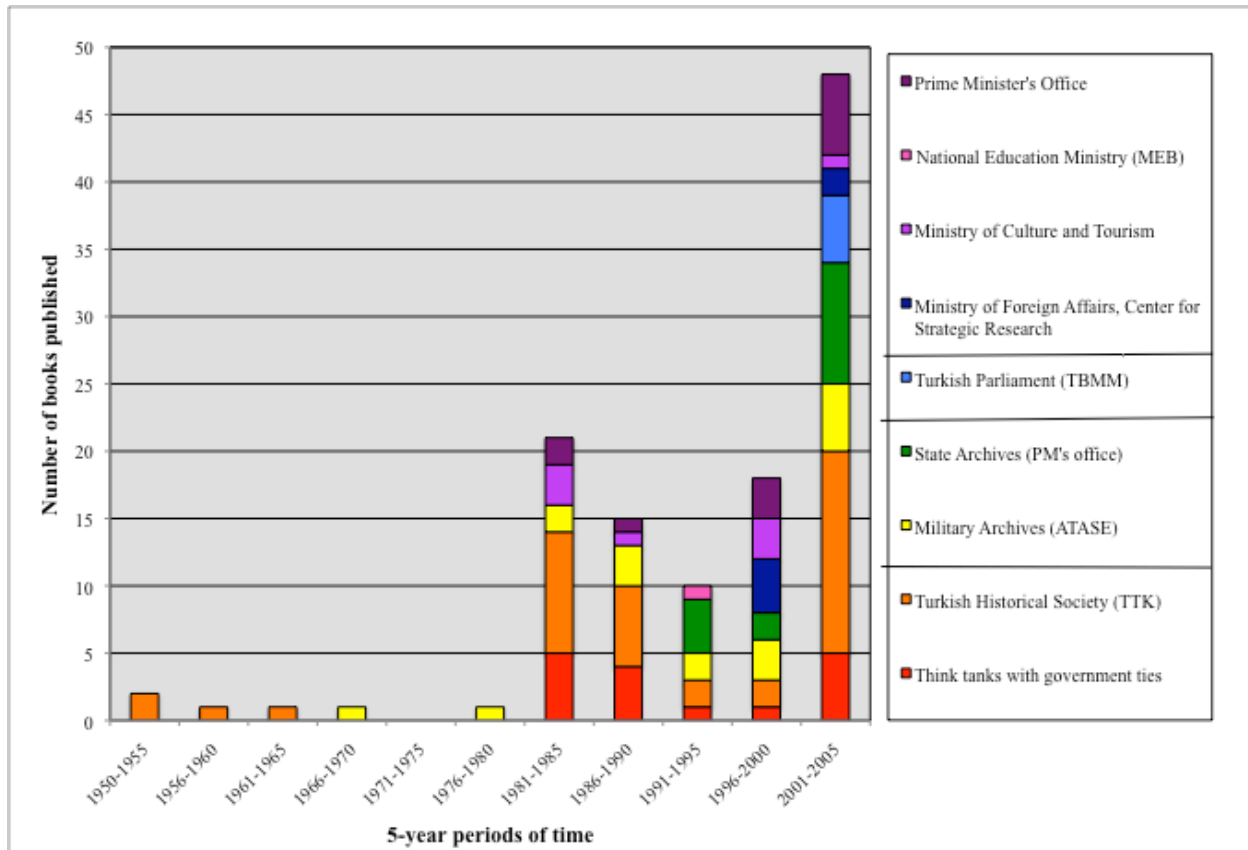
<sup>271</sup> These questions consider whether eastern Anatolia is the historic Armenian homeland, and whether Turks took this land from Armenians.

<sup>272</sup> Quasi-official publications are those that were not published by a government agency, but were published under the direction of or at the instruction of the MFA and/or the MGK.

<sup>273</sup> The books of documents that were published by the military archives in this phase were prepared by Niyazi Artan, Yücel Aktar and Faruk Aydın, “under the supervision of retired Major General İhsan Sakarya” (Özdemir 2008: 84 – my translation).

<sup>274</sup> TTK publications include: Asaf 1982; Şimşir 1982a, 1982b, 1983, 1985, 1989, 1990; Sevim 1983; Orel and Yuca 1983; Gürün 1983; Sonyel 1987, 1988; Ercan 1988; Öke 1991. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism’s publications include: Parmaksızoğlu 1981; Tengirşek 1981; Öney 1989. Publications by the Prime Ministry include: *Documents (Vol I)* 1982; Cengiz 1983; *Documents on Ottoman Armenians* 1983; *Documents (Vol III)* 1986. Publications by the military archives include: *Belgelerle Ermeni Sorunu* 1983; Sakarya 1984; *Ermeni belgeleri* 1987; *Geçmişten Bugüne Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri* 1989; Ucuzsatar 1990.





**Figure 4.1.** Trends in official and quasi-official publications on the Armenian question, 1950-2005<sup>275</sup>

### Marshalling evidence to support the official narrative

Another initiative, which also began in 1981, was to encourage and support archival research on the Armenian question and the publication of relevant documents from the Ottoman archives. Ömer Engin Lütem, who was involved in the government's strategizing on the 'Armenian question' at the time, reports that "since the claims of Armenians depend on mostly fake or misguided documents, it was important to publish the related documents" (2008: 40). The National Security Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated this effort (Lütem 2008: 40; *Ankara Domestic Service* 1989a), and İsmet Binark, who was the Director General of the Prime Minister's State Archives (*Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürü*), was instructed to find and publish archival documents on the Armenian question (Sarafian 1999).<sup>276</sup>

Around the same time, the MFA summoned the help of a group of retired diplomats and officers who could read Ottoman Turkish, which was the language used by officials in the Ottoman Empire and in the Republic of Turkey until 1928.<sup>277</sup> Under the leadership of the Foreign Ministry

<sup>275</sup> See Chapter 3 for information about how this information was gathered.

<sup>276</sup> Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24b], Ankara, March 2009.

<sup>277</sup> Ottoman Turkish (*Osmanlıca*) is quite different from the modern Turkish spoken and written in Turkey today. The two languages have a completely different orthography, differences in grammar, and vocabularies whose differences have grown over time. As a result of a language reform that was passed in 1928, and of ongoing reforms

and headed by the retired diplomat and officer Şinasi Orel, this group of retired officials worked with Ottoman archival documents related to the Armenian question; looking for, analyzing and publishing materials that could support the Turkish government's position.<sup>278</sup> This group, whose name was the Prime Minister's Archive Research Committee (Orel 1990: 7-8, cited in Özdemir 2008: 81), produced several books over the course of the 1980s, including a collection of Ottoman documents related to the Armenian issue (Ökte 1989), an English translation of Esat Uras' seminal 1950 book (Uras 1988), and a book that argued that key documents used by some scholars as evidence that the deaths of Armenians were planned and orchestrated by the Young Turks leaders were forgeries (Orel and Yuca 1983).<sup>279</sup> Moreover, the effort to locate and publish archival documents that supported Turkey's narrative also extended abroad. In the early 1980s, Bilâl Şimşir was sent to Britain to research the Armenian question as an 'official researcher',<sup>280</sup> which resulted in a series of publications of documents related to the Armenian question that had been located in the British archives.<sup>281</sup>

More ambitiously, the MFA pushed to have the archives related to the Armenian question catalogued and opened on an expedited basis.<sup>282</sup> This was undertaken for two reasons. The first was that officials realized that there were documents in the archives that would support Turkish arguments on this issue. The second reason was that officials felt that Turkey's narrative was less credible as long the relevant archives were not open to researchers. Thus in May 1985 the Foreign Minister Vahit Halefoğlu told the Turkish parliament that "publications based on documents in archives [sic] will be increased in order to counter Armenian claims against Turkey and to inform world public opinion about facts" (*Ankara ANATOLIA* 1985a). While this goal was announced in 1985, the relevant archives were only 'opened' in 1989, after a team of Turkish archivists had organized and catalogued a portion of the available documents. Importantly, the announced opening of the archives allowed Turkish officials to claim that they were taking positive steps to look into the issue, which convinced some foreign politicians to back off from pressuring Turkey, and gave Turkey credibility by appearing responsive to

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in the language in the eight decades since, most Turks cannot read, speak or write Ottoman Turkish; unless they have been trained in the language, usually for academic purposes. As a result, Turkish history prior to the language reform is inaccessible to those who might be curious to learn about the past themselves.

<sup>278</sup> Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-8], Istanbul, April 2009. According to Gürün's account, in addition to Orel, this group included: "Ambassador Nejat Ertüzün, Ambassador İlhan Akant, Ambassador Celâdet Kıyasî, Ambassador Sadun Terem and the late Ambassador Necmettin Tuncel" (1995: 205-6, my translation, as quoted in Özdemir 2008: 83). Another member of this research group was Süreyya Yüca (Özdemir 2008: 83). Another interviewee confirmed that this group's work was funded by the government (Author's interview with historian at the Turkish Historical Society [T-23], Ankara, March 2009.)

<sup>279</sup> Its authors, Şinasi Orel and Süreyya Yuca, were both retired military officers. Yuca was a retired Colonel, and Orel had been in the military, and after retiring from the military, had served as a Turkish Ambassador in several countries and briefly as Education Minister (in 1971). Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24b], Ankara, March 2009.

<sup>280</sup> Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-8], Istanbul, April 2009; Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24a], Ankara, May 2008.

<sup>281</sup> Şimşir was not the first member of the Turkish Historical Society to search for documents on the Armenian question in British archives. The historian Salahi Sonyel conducted similar research in the British Foreign Office archives in the 1970s, which is reflected in several publications on the Armenian question in the Turkish Historical Society's quarterly journal, *Belleten*. See, e.g.: Sonyel 1972 and 1977.

<sup>282</sup> Sarafian 1999; Gürün 1995: 388, cited in Özdemir 2008: 73; Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-31], Istanbul, April 2009; Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-8], Istanbul, April 2009; Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24a], Ankara, May 2008.

criticisms.<sup>283</sup> Thus, when the cataloguing of the archives was completed and they were officially ‘opened’ in 1989, the Turkish Foreign Minister Mesut Yılmaz declared: “ ‘The issue of Armenian claims must no longer be a subject of political exploitation. This is not a matter for politicians to solve but for historians and we want to contribute to this effort’ ” (Gurdilek 1989). Despite official claims, however, only *some* of the relevant archives were opened at the time, and those who were granted permission to research the Armenian question in the archives were typically Turks and other scholars whom Turkish authorities knew would not challenge the official narrative.

### Teaching the official narrative to Turkish students and citizens

The fourth element of the state’s strategy was to educate Turkish citizens and students about the ‘Armenian question,’ both in public speeches and other communications, and at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education.

Government officials worked with universities, especially through the newly created Council of Higher Education, to establish courses on the Armenian question and to encourage academic research into the issue, both among faculty and students. In 1983, the first university course on the Armenian question was offered at Ankara University by the political scientist Türkkaya Ataöv.<sup>284</sup> Turkish academics also started to publish work that supported the Turkish government’s position on the Armenian question. Among the academics who began to work on the issue, one of the earliest and the most prolific was Ataöv.<sup>285</sup> In addition, between 1983 and 1991, ten academic conferences, each of which focused on some aspect of the Armenian question, were held in Turkey (Özdemir 2008: 74-5).

At the same time, the Armenian question was introduced in Turkish secondary school textbooks.<sup>286</sup> This change was agreed upon by the various agencies involved in directing policies on the Armenian question at the time. One interviewee told me that diplomats in İAGM had insisted to the Ministry of National Education that the Armenian issue should go into textbooks, so that Turkish children would learn about the issue and not be completely ignorant of it, as most were at the time.<sup>287</sup> However, another high-level official from the MFA recalled that the National Education Ministry itself took the initiative to add the Armenian question to Turkish

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<sup>283</sup> A January 1989 article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* noted that “A [Turkish] Foreign Ministry spokesman said yesterday that Turkey hoped in this way to defuse criticism abroad, and in particular, to improve relations with the United States and Western European countries” (Howard 1989). Speaking more bluntly, the Foreign Minister Mesut Yılmaz asserted that “the archives w[ould] be opened ‘primarily to render ineffective the claims of Armenian genocide’” (Vryonis 1991: 104).

<sup>284</sup> Interestingly, one interviewee said that this effort was partially motivated by the perception among Turkish officials that many courses were offered on the Armenian Genocide in the US, and that Turkish students needed to be equally prepared to discuss the Armenian question (Author’s interview [T-10], Istanbul, April 2009).

<sup>285</sup> By my count, Ataöv has published at least 27 books (many of which are slim pamphlets) on the Armenian question. An extended interview with Ataöv, which was conducted by a *Hürriyet* correspondent on 23 April 1989, gives an overview of his views on the subject at the time (*Hürriyet* 1989).

<sup>286</sup> This change occurred at the same time that a broad revision of the curricula for Turkish textbooks was undertaken (Kaya et al. 2001: 161), but is notable nevertheless, given that textbooks published in the prior decades included almost no references to Armenians or to the Armenian question.

<sup>287</sup> Author’s interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24a], Ankara, May 2008.

textbooks.<sup>288</sup> Either way, the decision was made at a high level with the involvement of the MFA and the MEB.

As a result, high school history textbooks started to address the topic in 1981 with the addition of several pages dedicated to the Armenian question.<sup>289</sup> By 1983, the representation of the Armenian question in textbooks was significantly different from previous decades, reflecting the changes in the curriculum that had been announced in the summer of 1981.<sup>290</sup> In stark contrast to the silence on this issue that had been the norm through the late 1970s, some textbooks directly mentioned the 1915 deportation decision and some included sections on the Armenian question and its roots, history and consequences. Overall, the narrative in these textbooks acknowledged that something had happened to Ottoman Armenians in 1915, but argued that deportation was a decision that *had* to be taken by the authorities, and that the deportation was incomparable to the violence of Armenians before, during and after the war.<sup>291</sup>

In addition to changes in the coverage of the Armenian question in textbooks, in 1982 the education ministry sent teachers instructions about what they should say about the ‘Armenian question.’ Kaplan writes that:

“a government [MEB] circular instructed teachers to ‘point out that we [Turks] had no problems with *Armenians*, who had earlier lived under the Byzantine yoke in Anatolia. It must be explained that in recent times they have been supported by foreign powers and that bloody crimes have been perpetrated on our diplomatic representatives abroad. It must be made clear that the Turkish nation has been trapped into political intrigues with terrorist aims and that, as always, it patiently waits for the justice of its case to be accepted” (2006: 198).

To reach the broader population, Turkish officials began to talk about the Armenian question and Armenian terrorism in speeches to domestic audiences, which I discuss in the next section. Most interestingly, some of these speeches were combined with events organized to commemorate Turkish victims of Armenian massacres from the World War I period. In one such event, on 9 July 1986, President Kenan Evren “unveiled a monument” in a village in the vicinity of Erzurum to commemorate nearly three hundred Turks who were claimed to have been massacred by Armenians in 1918. “In a statement at the unveiling ceremony, Evren said: The Turkish nation has never perpetrated a massacre. It rebuilt countries it entered” (*Ankara ANATOLIA* 1986).<sup>292</sup> Similarly, in February 1989 the opening ceremony of “the Armenian massacre section of the

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<sup>288</sup> Author’s interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-31], Istanbul, April 2009.

<sup>289</sup> Aydın notes that Armenians were mentioned for the first time in a two-page section in a Turkish history textbook that was published in 1979 (2001: 62). In my analysis, a high school history textbook published in 1981 mentioned Armenians more than in earlier textbooks, but much less frequently than, and with a different tone than in, the textbooks published in subsequent years.

<sup>290</sup> In the summer of 1981, a new curriculum for History of the Revolution of the Turkish Republic and Atatürkism course was announced by the Instruction and Education Board.

<sup>291</sup> For details about how this issue was presented in textbooks in this phase, see the discussion of the *content* of the narrative (below.) See also: Dixon 2010a.

<sup>292</sup> In the short article about this event, the Turks who were commemorated were referred to as “martyrs,” while the perpetrators were referred to as “Armenian gangs” who “cruelly massacred” “without discrimination among young, old, woman, or man” (*Ankara ANATOLIA* 1986). (N.B.: I think these were Evren’s words, but it is not clear from the article.)

Erzurum Museum” was attended by Evren, Prime Minister Özal and Defense Minister Ercan Vuralhan (Gultekin 1989). In his speech at this ceremony, Evren declared:

““When they started shooting us in the back during the occupation, we had to defend ourselves. First it was the Turkish nation that was subjected to massacre. After that, it defended itself.’ He continued: ‘It is a virtue of the Turkish nation that it quickly forgets the past. Our nation was subjected to massacres in these areas. The massacred were not military, but civilians, such as infants, children and women. Our nation has never capitalized on this as propaganda for world public opinion. If these martyrs were buried, so was our grief. If the Armenians had not started a campaign against us in world public opinion, I do not believe our nation would have resorted to this. We opened mass graves showing the atrocities committed by the Armenians. ... If we inform the world of these events, we will be vindicated’” (Gultekin 1989).

Finally, beyond speeches and commemorations, Lütem mentions that the “TRT [the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation] prepared and broadcasted many programs addressing Armenian issues” (2008: 40).

#### Gaining international support for the official narrative

The final element of this strategic framework involved targeting external sources of criticism, cultivating external sources of support, and working to suppress references to the events internationally. While this was somewhat of a continuation of Turkey’s diplomatic strategy from the previous phase, the extent and intensity of Turkey’s international public relations efforts in this phase were quantitatively and qualitatively different from earlier efforts. Highlighting this, Lütem reports:

“to respond to *any* type of Armenian publication was among the decisions of the National Security Council. To this end, many letters were sent in reply to the Armenian claims which were published in foreign newspapers and periodicals. Furthermore, to counter-balance the Armenian claims, the Turkish perspective was to be voiced to the conferences, radio stations, and television programs organized in foreign countries where these Armenian claims were being made” (2008: 40 – emphasis added).

The core goal in this area was “to pull Western countries to Turkey’s side,” which “necessitated the formation of a lobby” (Özdemir 2008: 67, my translation). The United States was a particular focus, given its importance as an ally and a great power, and given that the genocide had become a persistent irritant in Turkish-American relations. Thus Turkey continued to demand unstinting support for its position from the US President and State department. Reflecting this, “in a little known 1987 agreement with Turkey, the United States had apparently promised to block such Genocide resolutions” (Bobelian 2009: 177).<sup>293</sup> Perhaps more importantly, Turkey did not hesitate to use more than words to pressure the US and other countries not to recognize the genocide. Thus in conjunction with lobbying and other soft power strategies, Turkish officials

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<sup>293</sup> Bobelian further notes that “the 1987 Letter Agreement supplemented a more comprehensive agreement on defense and economic cooperation dating back to 1980” (2009: 281, footnote 48).

made material threats and followed through with actions if necessary.<sup>294</sup> In addition, however, the Turkish embassy expanded its focus far beyond the executive branch of the US government.<sup>295</sup> In this phase, Şükrü Elekdağ, who was the Turkish Ambassador to the United States from 1979-89, strove to gain support for Turkey's image and position among politicians, academics, business interests and powerful lobbying groups in the US.<sup>296</sup>

Beginning in the early 1980s, the Turkish government hired "public relations firms to undertake the 'improvement of Turkey's public image' and to promote the country's causes" in the US, at the expense of over one million dollars per year (Vryonis 1991: 88). For example, "in 1983, Turkey hired Gray and Co., a Washington public relations and lobbying firm ... , to lobby for U.S. military and economic aid and to assist Elekdağ in 'countering any campaign and activities detrimental to the interest and image of Turkey'" (Nesmith and Alexander 1987). And by the late 1980s, Turkey had hired several different Washington lobbying firms, and was spending "close to \$1 million a year," to help combat references to and Congressional resolutions about the Armenian Genocide, among other things. Moreover, "by the beginning of 1990, it had signed up eight lobbying and public relations firms with annual fees near \$3 million" (Bobelian 2009: 181).

Elekdağ also cultivated the support of local advocates who could argue on Turkey's behalf in debates in the US Congress.<sup>297</sup> A key target was Jewish-American organizations, which were persuaded – by Turkish-Jewish businessmen, Israeli officials, and veiled threats from Turkish officials – to support Turkey's position in general and in attempts to pass resolutions recognizing the Armenian Genocide in the US Congress in particular. As I discuss in the next section, elements of the official narrative in this phase were particularly targeted to appeal for the support of Jewish groups in the US and in Israel.<sup>298</sup> At the same time, the Turkish government sent delegations of Turkish businessmen to the US to lobby their co-religionists to support Turkey's positions, especially on issues related to Turkey's policies on the Armenian question and the Cyprus issue.<sup>299</sup> Beginning in 1986, Turkey also drew closer to Israel– appointing as a "second

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<sup>294</sup> For example, in conjunction with its massive lobbying effort against a resolution that was before the US Congress in 1989, Bobelian writes that Turkey "raised the stakes by restricting U.S. military maneuvers and reconnaissance flights, halting visits to ports, suspending military cooperation meetings, and stopping the use of its training facilities" (2009: 185).

<sup>295</sup> For example, see: *The Armenian Weekly* 2009.

<sup>296</sup> In a reflection of Turkish efforts among the American business community, Jørgensen describes how, when a resolution to recognize the genocide was introduced in the US Congress in 1990, "letters from firms all over the USA poured in to Congress with warnings of the unfortunate consequences that would ensue for American exports if resolution 212 was accepted" (2003: 217).

<sup>297</sup> See: Vryonis 1991: 79-118; Bali 2009; Bobelian 2009: 180-3.

<sup>298</sup> Several arguments were made in these efforts to garner the support of Jewish organizations and lobbying groups in the US (Howe 1982). One argument was that the Holocaust was unique and that to call what happened to Armenians "genocide" would threaten the distinction of the Holocaust as an incomparably horrific crime. Another argument was that good relations with Turkey were strategically important for Israel, in military and economic terms, and that support for Armenian claims by Israel and/or Jewish groups would unnecessarily threaten the strategic partnership between Turkey and Israel. The third argument, which was the most cynical and ruthless argument made by Turkish officials and their proxies, was that Jews in Turkey might be somehow threatened if Israel and/or Jewish groups continued to bring attention to the Armenian Genocide (Arax 1985). Göçek also notes this strategy (2011: 55-6).

<sup>299</sup> One retired diplomat commented that Turkish Jews, particularly wealthy Turkish-Jewish businessmen with connections in the US and in Israel, had worked very hard on Turkey's behalf in the US and have helped a great deal (Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-20], Ankara, May 2008). Interestingly, another interviewee

secretary” “a diplomat with ambassadorial rank”<sup>300</sup> – in part for strategic calculations related to the Armenian question (Bloxham 2005: 221). One interviewee who was involved in this process confirmed that the decision to fully restore diplomatic relations with Israel in 1991 stemmed in part from Turkey’s desire to have the support of Jewish-American lobbying groups to help fight genocide recognition efforts in the US.<sup>301</sup> Moreover, several former diplomats emphasized the value of Jewish-American groups’ lobbying in Turkey’s efforts to defeat resolutions about the genocide in the US Congress.<sup>302</sup> One example of the success of these interrelated strategies is that when a resolution about the genocide was being considered in the US Senate in 1989, the Israeli embassy and American Jewish organizations and leaders reportedly lobbied on Turkey’s behalf behind the scenes in Congress for the defeat of the resolution.<sup>303</sup>

In addition, Elekdağ nurtured support from academics specializing in Turkish and Ottoman studies. In many cases this support was won rather indirectly, as individuals calculated that if they worked on or even wrote critically about this topic they might lose access to archives in Turkey, dramatically diminish their chances of securing funding for research in Turkey, and threaten relationships with Turkish colleagues, interlocutors and friends. In addition, Turkish officials offered increased funding and other research opportunities for scholars working on Ottoman and Turkish subjects, which increased the downside cost of working on the Armenian question. As part of these efforts, in 1982 the Turkish government established and funded (with three million dollars) the Washington-based Institute of Turkish Studies (ITS), which supports academic research on modern Turkey and the Ottoman Empire through competitive grants and fellowships. ITS offers funding to universities, faculty and graduate students, and is one of the few sources of research funding available in the US that are particularly targeted for research on Turkish and Ottoman topics.<sup>304</sup> And while ITS is registered as a non-profit foundation (Lowry 2000) and is hosted at Georgetown University, almost all of its funding comes from the Turkish government and it has a close connection with the Turkish embassy in Washington (Matossian

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mentioned that there was a Turkish-*Armenian* businessman in the first delegation that was sent to the US. He was presumably unsuccessful in convincing Armenian-Americans to support Turkey’s positions, because Turkish-Armenian businessmen were not included in later delegations (Author’s interview with researcher [T-22b], Istanbul, April 2009). For more on this, see: Bali 2009.

<sup>300</sup> See: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (n.d.: 1).

<sup>301</sup> Author’s interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-20], Ankara, May 2008. Of course, gaining Israel’s and Jewish-American lobbying groups’ support on this issue was not the only motivation behind the improvement in diplomatic relations. See Inbar (2009: 228-236) for a fuller discussion of the reasons behind the upgrade in diplomatic relations between Turkey and Israel.

<sup>302</sup> One former diplomat said that Jewish lobbying on Turkey’s behalf has had a ‘considerable’ impact and has helped a lot, especially in preventing the House of Representatives from passing resolutions (Author’s interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-31], Istanbul, April 2009). That said, Bobelian (2009: 183) emphasizes that not all Jewish organizations acquiesced to Turkey’s and Israel’s request for support on this issue; some Jewish groups sided with Armenians, while others stayed out of the debate. See, for example, the November 1989 statement by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, which recognized the Armenian Genocide, at: [http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.241/current\\_category.76/affirmation\\_detail.html](http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.241/current_category.76/affirmation_detail.html), accessed on 24 June 2011. Nevertheless, another former diplomat stated that in the early 1990s, Turkey had the “full support” of the Jewish lobby in the US (Author’s interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-20], Ankara, May 2008).

<sup>303</sup> On this, see: Blitzer 1989; Shalev 1989; Frucht and Jerolimski 2000. For more information on Israel’s support for Turkey’s narrative, see: Auron 2003.

<sup>304</sup> It is not clear to me that ITS does much other than offer different fellowships and grants.

2008b).<sup>305</sup> In a reflection of the ends to which ITS' influence could be used within American academic circles, in 1985 ITS reached out to scholars of Turkish and Ottoman studies in the US, requesting that they add their names to an informational advertisement that would be placed in American newspapers about the Armenian question. The ad, which was paid for by the Assembly of Turkish-American Associations (on which more below),<sup>306</sup> was published in the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Times* and the *New York Times* (Guroian 1986: 324-5). It was "an open letter to Congress asserting that Armenians, like Muslims, had only been the victims of 'inter-communal warfare' in 1915, and that the label 'genocide' was therefore inappropriate" (Bloxham 2005: 220). Most of the scholars who were contacted agreed (sixty-nine in total), although most were not experts on the topic and many seem not to have understood how the ad would be used by the Turkish government (which I discuss in the next section) (Charny and Fromer 1998).<sup>307</sup>

In addition to establishing and funding ITS, in the early to mid-1990s the Turkish government spent over \$3 million to establish six endowed chairs in Ottoman and Turkish studies at leading American universities (Lowry 2000: 114).<sup>308</sup> As academic positions, there is much less scope for direct intervention on the part of Turkish officials. That said, in 1993 the academic who was selected to fill the first such endowed chair at Princeton University was the outgoing director of the Institute of Turkish Studies, Heath Lowry, which raised many questions about the independence of the chairs and the intentions of the Turkish government in sponsoring them.<sup>309</sup> This incident aside, however, the potential impact of these endowed chairs is generally more subtle: in defining the terms of some of the most prestigious endowed chairs, these chairs help shape the direction of the fields of Ottoman and Turkish studies. Acknowledging this potential, in 1998 UCLA decided to turn down an offer of \$1 million from the Turkish government to create an endowed chair in Turkish studies.<sup>310</sup> Ultimately, UCLA chose to turn down the offer because of the conditions set on potential holders of the chair: "The agreement limited the search to scholars having 'cordial relations with academic circles in Turkey' and 'whose published

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<sup>305</sup> Jørgensen notes that ITS has also received donations from American defense manufacturers and American and Turkish companies (2003: 211).

<sup>306</sup> The geographer İlhan Kaya writes that the ATAA and the Federation of Turkish American Associations "receive a large part of their funding from the Turkish government" (2009: 625), and in an earlier article he wrote that the FTAA and the ATAA "have been working to bring different Turkish-American organizations together for which they receive financial and political support from the Turkish government" (2004: 298). He does not offer evidence to support these claims, however, so I am not sure of their accuracy.

<sup>307</sup> Two decades later, the close connection between the Turkish government and ITS was again highlighted: It was revealed in 2007 that the prominent (recently-deceased) Ottoman historian Donald Quataert had been pressured to resign from his position as chairman of the board of governors of ITS in 2006, because he had acknowledged the Armenian Genocide in a review of a book on the topic. In a letter of protest to the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan, the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) wrote that Quataert had resigned "after he refused to accede to the request of ITS's honorary chairman, Ambassador Nebi [sic] Şensoy, that he issue a retraction of a scholarly book review he wrote about the killings of Armenians (1915-1918) in the Ottoman Empire." Apparently, Şensoy had "threatened to revoke the funding for the ITS if he did not publicly retract statements made in his review or separate himself from the Chairmanship of the ITS" (MESA 2008: 1-2). For more on this, see: Bobelian 2009: 192; Matossian 2008b; MESA 2008. For the book review that prompted this controversy, see: Quataert 2006.

<sup>308</sup> The endowed chairs were created at Princeton University, Harvard University, the University of Chicago, Indiana University, Georgetown University and Portland State University (Lowry 2000: 114).

<sup>309</sup> For a brief article on this, see: Honan 1996.

<sup>310</sup> UCLA had initially agreed to the offer and accepted a down payment of \$250,000, but when strong protests were raised by academics and others, the university reconsidered the decision.



works are based upon extensive utilization of archives and libraries in Turkey” (*Associated Press Newswires* 1997). While these conditions were not *prima facie* evidence of an ulterior motive, they would conveniently exclude almost any scholar who worked on the Armenian Genocide.

Finally, Elekdağ also encouraged the establishment and/or revitalization of Turkish-American organizations.<sup>311</sup> About this strategy, Lütem writes that “another precaution was to prepare the Turks living in foreign countries for answering Armenian claims. ... The most effective way to confront this pressure [from “the Armenian Diaspora”] was the counter activities of the Turks who became citizens of those countries. Kamuran Gürün held many interviews with the representatives of the Turks in these countries by going to these countries in order to prompt them to start the endeavor in this way” (2008: 40-1). In the United States, the Assembly of Turkish-American Associations (ATAA) was the main organizational reflection of this strategy. With the help of Turkish officials, the ATAA issued several manuals and pamphlets articulating the Turkish perspective on the Armenian question in the early- to mid-1980s. These pamphlets targeted an American audience, and were particularly aimed at politicians. In one booklet issued by the ATAA in 1982, “the opening lines read: ‘In recent years claims have been made by some Armenians in Europe, America, and elsewhere that the Armenians suffered terrible misrule in the Ottoman Empire. Such claims are absurd’” (Hovannisian 1986: 129). In addition, the ATAA organized workshops across the country to teach members how to organize letter-writing and telephone campaigns (Greenberger 1988), with the result that Turkish-Americans wrote numerous letters about the Armenian question (and about other issues of political importance to Turkey) to their Senators and Representatives in Congress and to the editors of American newspapers. And in all of these efforts, the themes that were emphasized correlated with the contours of Turkey’s official narrative in this phase.

#### The content of the official narrative in Phase Two

Along with these changes in *strategy*, the *content* of the official narrative changed significantly in this phase.

A central theme in this and subsequent phases was the argument that what happened to Armenians was not a genocide. Interestingly, however, this point was primarily made to international audiences; in speeches and texts targeted toward *domestic* audiences, the term genocide was rarely mentioned. That said, for both sets of audiences, three broad reasons were offered that supported the contention that the events should not be termed as genocide.

The reason most frequently offered in official statements was that what had occurred were not massacres. Instead, it was argued that what went on between Turks and Armenians during World War I was a ‘civil war,’ which had been initiated by Armenians’ ‘armed uprising,’ ‘rebellion’ and/or ‘massacres’ of Muslims. For example, in a letter to the editor of *The Washington Post* in April 1983, Şükrü Elekdağ wrote: “The Ottoman state in 1915 was the scene of a civil war within a global war—the civil war stemming from an armed uprising of Armenians seeking to impose by force the establishment of an exclusively Armenian state in an area where the majority population was not Armenians” (Elekdağ 1983a). Later that year, in a letter to the editor

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<sup>311</sup> Elekdağ also fostered the development of business associations for American companies with interests in Turkey.

of *The Wall Street Journal*, Elekdağ argued: “The massacre of Moslems was the main tactic of the Armenian groups. The deliberately sought to trigger reprisals by aggrieved Moslem communities against Armenian minority groupings in the Ottoman Empire. ... As with most terrorist movements, the Armenian ‘cause’ prompted the terrorists to forswear all inner doubts, all moral restraints. Bloodletting was the chosen instrument, their own people, by intent, the ultimate victims” (Elekdağ 1983c).

Textbooks emphasized Armenian violence and treachery even more than these official statements.<sup>312</sup> Overall, textbooks portrayed Armenians as a disloyal minority group that violently rose up against the benign Ottoman government and killed innocent Turks. To a large degree, Armenians were presented as others that were not part of the Turkish nation. This had the effect both of rendering their suffering distant and not as important as that of Turks, and also of making it much easier to imagine the Armenians’ supposed treachery and violence, since they were not really acknowledged as *citizens*.<sup>313</sup> Thus in contrast to the very limited amount that was written about the deportation, textbooks dwelt on the nationalist activities and desires of Armenians, the uprising of Armenians during the war, and the violent and ‘inhuman’ attacks of Armenians on innocent Turks and Turkish villages.<sup>314</sup> Textbooks explained that once the Russians ‘incited’ nationalism among Ottoman Armenians, the latter acted brutally and violently, massacring thousands of Turks before and/or after the war. A 1983 textbook stated: “The Armenian Committees, blind with rage, attacked many Turkish cities, town and villages, and murdered tens of thousands of Turks, without distinguishing between children, the old and women” (Su and Mumcu 1983: 118). Likewise, a 1989 textbook stated: “Murdering Turks [in eastern Anatolia] as a collective, they [the Armenians] began a movement to annihilate the Turks completely. They set fire to villages. They utterly destroyed towns and cities. They murdered tens of thousands of Turks with a brutality that has never been seen before. With these tragedies, some Armenians added dark and shameful pages to the history of humanity” (Uğurlu and Balcı 1989: 229).

The second argument offered in support of the rejection of the term genocide was that there was either ‘insufficient’ or ‘no reliable’ evidence to support such ‘allegations,’ that such ‘allegations’ were ‘unfounded’ or ‘baseless,’ and/or ‘misrepresentations’ or ‘distortions’ of the historical truth. This was a central argument that was made to both domestic and foreign audiences. For example, in 1985, “Ercument Yavuzalp, Turkish ambassador to the U.N. office in Geneva, told a U.N. human rights panel: ‘The accusation of a premeditated and organized intention to destroy Armenians is not only unfair and unjust, but it is also absolutely impossible to sustain by any objective analysis of historical realities’” (*San Francisco Chronicle* 1985). And in 1986, Nihat

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<sup>312</sup> For this phase, I analyzed eight high school history textbooks that were published between 1981 and 1991. These textbooks are listed in Appendix 1.

<sup>313</sup> On the ‘othering’ of Armenians and minority groups in Turkish history writing, see: Boztemur 2004: 126; Göl 2005; Kaya et al. 2001: 166-7; *Tarih Eğitim ve Tarihte “Öteki” Sorunu* 1998; Copeaux 2002.

<sup>314</sup> Kaplan’s study of education in the 1980s shows that the inclusion of the Armenian issue in textbooks and the emphasis on Armenians’ violence were not limited to history textbooks or to the high school level. He writes that “the third-grade life sciences reader simply states that ‘the Armenians who for years had lived with Turks began to oppress and torture the Turks.’ In eighth grade, pupils read graphic accounts of Armenian atrocities in their history textbook. They study, for example, the report a Turkish general submitted to his British colleague after World War I: ‘The massacre at Erzincan was horrible....They burned Muslim people inside buildings they set on fire; they filled the wells with corpses....All the children were bayoneted, the elderly and the women stuffed with hay and burned, the youth chopped up with axes. Livers and hearts were seen hung on nails’” (2006: 198-9).

Erman, the Turkish Consul General in Los Angeles, argued in the *Los Angeles Times* that “No reliable evidence exists to justify the allegation that the Ottoman Empire either planned or carried out any systematic massacre of its Armenian population” (Erman 1986). The argument made to domestic audiences was a slight variation, with statements emphasizing that Turkish officials were working to find documents and were taking other steps to demonstrate that Armenians’ claims were indeed baseless and false. For example, in January 1984 the Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal noted that “a growing number of publications based on archive material show that all Armenian claims are baseless” (*Ankara Domestic Service* 1984). And in August 1985, a Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman asserted: “we have proved ... that Armenian claims are false and invalid” (*Ankara ANATOLIA* 1985b).

A third argument that was commonly made in official statements was that calling the events of 1915 a genocide ‘dilutes the moral force of the memory of the Holocaust’ and “deprive[s] the term of its meaning” (e.g., Elekdag 1983b; Elekdag 1983c).<sup>315</sup> These arguments were primarily made in statements targeting foreign audiences.<sup>316</sup> Moreover, this connection was mostly made between 1982 and 1985, which immediately preceded the upgrade in diplomatic relations between Turkey and Israel that occurred in 1986 and the period in which Jewish-American organizations in the United States lobbied on behalf of Turkey’s interests in US Congressional debates over the Armenian Genocide. It thus appears that the explicit connection that was made between the Holocaust and the Armenian case was part of Turkey’s efforts to gain the support of Israel and Jewish-American political organizations. Even more cynically, Turkish officials reportedly followed up such statements with behind-the-scenes warnings/threats to Israeli officials and to Jewish groups in Israel and the United States that if Israel (or prominent Jewish groups) were to publicly recognize the Armenian Genocide, Turkish Jews might be in danger. For example, in 1982 Israeli officials tried – at the behest of Turkey – to cancel an academic conference on genocide at which the Armenian Genocide was to be mentioned. According to Elie Wiesel’s account in a *New York Times* article, Turkey had threatened that if the conference took place, it might “sever diplomatic relations with Israel and take other measures against the lives and livelihood of Turkish Jews” (Howe 1982).<sup>317</sup> In addition to these calculations, the historian Torben Jørgensen usefully highlights another factor underlying this theme, arguing that

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<sup>315</sup> Other, related arguments were that Armenians were “trying to jump on the Israeli train” (Elekdag, as quoted in Howe 1982), that calling the events of 1915 a genocide would “take advantage of the sympathy and understanding felt for the victims of the Holocaust” (Elekdag 1983a), and that “to compare events of 1914-15 in the Ottoman Empire with Hitler’s planned extermination of European Jews in World War II is a disservice to the memory of millions of victims of the Nazis whose only crime was to be born Jewish” (Elekdag 1985). Ironically, Turkish officials did not always follow their own moral yardstick: In July 1983, the Turkish Foreign Minister İlder Türkmen was quoted as saying: “‘The Turkish nation’s retaliation will be as heavy as its patience has been great .... Armenian organizations are committing the worst example of genocide, but they will pay heavily for these crimes’” (*New York Times* 1983). Along with these arguments, Turkish officials often also mentioned that Turkey has historically been a safe haven for Jews fleeing from oppression. For example, in a letter to the editor of *The New York Times* in 1982, Elekdag observed that “a central theme of Turkish history, religious tolerance, finds its fullest expression in the history of Jewry in Turkey. Turkey provided refuge to thousands of Jews fleeing the Iberian Peninsula during the Inquisition. Tens of thousands escaping from Nazi-occupied Europe found haven in Turkey. Many became Turkish citizens” (Elekdag 1982).

<sup>316</sup> In my analysis of statements and speeches before domestic audiences in this phase, the only two references to the Holocaust that I found were statements by Turkish officials that were made in response to questions in press conferences (once in 1985 and again in 1989.)

<sup>317</sup> For more on this conference, see: Charny and Davidson 1983.

it was a reaction to the emergence of the field of comparative genocide studies in the early 1980s, and to scholars' comparisons of the Armenian Genocide with the Holocaust (2003: 213-15).<sup>318</sup>

As in the earlier phase, the deportation was largely left out of the official narrative. In this phase, the decision to 'relocate' the Armenians was occasionally mentioned in official statements, which was a euphemistic way of talking about the deportation. In these instances, it was mentioned in the context of arguments that Armenians' violence and massacres led Ottoman authorities to conclude that "they had no alternative but to relocate the Armenians" (Elekdag 1983c). In a speech in Erzurum in July 1986, the Turkish President Kenan Evren referred to the deportation in passing, bluntly stating: "we sent them – the Armenians living here at the time – away for the atrocities they committed" (*Ankara Domestic Service* 1986). Moreover, half of the textbooks that I analyzed directly mentioned the 1915 deportation of Ottoman Armenians, albeit very briefly,<sup>319</sup> and most often by addressing the government's 'decision' to deport Armenians, with no details about the actual process or outcome of the deportation. In those textbooks that mentioned the 1915 deportation decision, it was then implied or stated outright that the decision was taken to ensure the safety of the Ottoman army and Turks from marauding Armenian attackers (Su and Mumcu 1983: 118; Şenünver et al. 1989: 89). For example, Şenünver et al. (1989: 89) wrote:

"Considering the context of war a convenient opportunity, they [Armenians] organized raids on villages and cities in which Turks lived. They mercilessly murdered children, women and old people who could not go to war. They started to attack from behind the Turkish army, which was engaged in war with the Russians. Because of this, the Ottoman government made the decision (in 1915) to make the Armenians migrate to Syria, which at that time was still an Ottoman province, in order to ensure the protection and security of the goods and lives of those people living in the war region."

Another, related theme was the argument that Armenians had died from 'famine,' 'epidemics,' 'disease,' and/or 'sickness.' This argument first appeared in 1983 (e.g., Ludington 1983), and was a frequent refrain in official statements made throughout this phase, up until 1992. Similar rationales for Armenian deaths were offered in some of the textbooks in this period. While textbooks *did not* mention the violence of the deportation, the vast scope of Armenian deaths,<sup>320</sup> or the role of agents of the government in the deportation and massacres of Armenians, three of the four textbooks that mentioned the deportation *did* allude (briefly) to the fact that 'some' Armenians died. As in official statements, these admissions were followed by rationalizations of the deaths. For instance, a 1983 textbook stated: "During the migration, a portion of Armenians lost their lives because of lack of public security and from natural conditions. But this should also not be forgotten: At Sarikamış<sup>321</sup> alone, almost 100,000 Turkish soldiers died because of

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<sup>318</sup> That said, I do not think this was Turkish officials' *central* motivation. Jørgensen does not sufficiently consider the impact of Armenian terrorist attacks and international recognition efforts on the changes in the official narrative in this phase, which I think leads him to overstate the impact of the development of the field of genocide studies on the official narrative (especially on p. 219).

<sup>319</sup> It usually comprised less than one paragraph within a 3-5-page section on the Armenian question.

<sup>320</sup> These textbooks did not offer any indication of *how many* Armenians died.

<sup>321</sup> This was a Turkish military campaign in World War I, during which the Ottoman army suffered a great military loss, mainly from poor planning and logistics, resulting in tens of thousands of deaths.

natural conditions and neglect. ... In fact, thousands of Armenians reached Syria safe and sound and there continued their lives in the protection of the Turkish State” (Su and Mumcu 1983: 118). Along similar lines, a 1989 textbook stated that “During this migration some Armenians died from catching epidemic sicknesses. Some Armenians experienced attacks by highway robbers” (Uğurlu and Balcı 1989: 229).

In addition, the question of responsibility for the outcome of the deportation was almost never mentioned in official statements. I found only a couple of outright references to responsibility in this phase. In a speech at the UN in October 1982, the Turkish Foreign Minister İler Türkmen argued that “The Ottoman Empire collapsed following the First World War and many new states were established on its territories and the young Turkish Republic could not possibly be held responsible for incidents of that era” (*Ankara ANATOLIA* 1982).<sup>322</sup> And in a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* written in May 1985, Elekdag argued: “Ottoman responsibility, if any, must lie in the empire’s inability to protect its civilian population (both Moslem and Christian) from wide-scale civil war, famine and disease while fighting a world war on five fronts. To label that ‘genocide’ threatens to deprive the word of meaning. The charge could apply to most countries at some time” (Elekdag 1985). The issue of ‘responsibility’ was directly addressed in those textbooks, however, that actually mentioned the ‘deportation decision.’ Culpability for the results of the deportation was completely disavowed. For example, a 1983 textbook argued: “This was a very appropriate decision. ... The Turkish Nation is definitely not responsible for the things that happened during the Armenians’ migration” (Su and Mumcu 1983: 118).

The argument that everyone suffered, which was a key theme in the first phase of the narrative, continued in this phase. It shifted, however, from the argument that everyone had suffered, to the claim that there had been roughly equal losses/deaths on each side. Examples from this phase include claims that: ‘Armenians probably killed as many Turks,’ ‘Armenians as well as Turks died’ (e.g., Elekdag 1983b), ‘more than 2 million Turks died during the same period,’ and ‘there was a heavy toll on all sides.’

A key theme in this phase was the fear that recognition of Armenians’ claims would inevitably lead to territorial claims and demands for compensation. This fear had undergirded the official narrative from its beginning, and could be said to be an *implicit* part of the narrative in the first phase, inasmuch as citizens and students were exhorted to be on guard against and to oppose threats from internal and external enemies who might try to destroy the unity of the country.<sup>323</sup> In this phase, however, this theme became an *explicit* part of the narrative, primarily in statements made to domestic audiences.<sup>324</sup> In speeches and statements made before domestic audiences, this was one of the most frequent points and one that was consistently made throughout this phase. Combined with this warning, leaders often called on the Turkish people to be on guard against this possibility and to protect the unity of the Turkish nation and territory. For example, in typically blunt fashion, the Turkish leader General Kenan Evren said the following in a public

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<sup>322</sup> Note: It appears that this article is paraphrasing Türkmen’s statement.

<sup>323</sup> For more on this fear, see the discussion in Chapter 3.

<sup>324</sup> This fear did *not* frequently appear in statements intended for foreign audiences. In one reference to these fears that appeared in the foreign press, “Daryal Batibay, charge d’affaires at the Turkish Embassy in Washington” was reported to have argued that “A resolution confirming such ‘so-called genocide’ could be the first step leading to Armenian demands for reparations and potential requests for territory” (McKenna 1989).

speech in June 1981: “Armenians outside the country ... are demanding land from us. I ask you; why are they asking for land now? Why did they not ask for land during Atatürk’s rule or even when the Ottoman Empire was at its weakest? The reason is that there was chaos and a threat of civil war in the country.”<sup>325</sup> Like vultures, they thought they might grab something from us” (*Ankara Domestic Service* 1981). This fear also appeared in Turkish high school history textbooks. In textbooks, the Armenian presence in the Ottoman Empire was explicitly downplayed, with half of the textbooks noting that Armenians did not constitute a majority in any Ottoman province, so their claims to Ottoman territories were unfounded.<sup>326</sup> In some textbooks, this fear issue was also more directly communicated. For example, in the context of a discussion of the Treaty of Lausanne, one textbook emphasized that “Armenians did not constitute a majority in any province at any time. Accordingly then, Turkey will not cede an inch of land to the Armenians. Armenians who decide to live in Turkey will live fully as Turkish citizens” (Parmaksızoğlu 1988: 114-5).

The argument that ‘this is an issue that should be addressed by historians, not politicians’ became a key theme in the latter half of this phase. The argument emerged in the May 1985 advertisement that was placed in several major American newspapers by the ATAA. Thereafter, Turkish officials began referring to these scholars’ statement, emphasizing that ‘objective’ and ‘unbiased’ analysis of the history was needed (e.g., Erman 1986) and that “the assessment of such incidents should be left to historians” (*Ankara Domestic Service* 1987e). The argument became a central plank in the Turkish position after the Ottoman archives were ‘opened’ in May 1989. In a letter sent to the US President George H. W. Bush in October 1989, which was several months after the ‘opening’ of the Ottoman archives, the Turkish Prime Minister Özal “stated that such problems should be handled by historians, recalling that the Ottoman archives were made available to researchers toward this end.” He further “noted that it would be totally wrong for politicians to pass judgment on historical events at a time when academicians are in the process of studying the allegations” (*Ankara Domestic Service* 1989b). Similarly, in an article published in *The Wall Street Journal* in November 1989, Heath Lowry, who was then the head of ITS, argued: “Now that Turkey has responded positively and in good faith to these requests [i.e., to open its archives], the very least Congress can do is to set aside its attempts to legislate historical questions and allow the scholars time to study and write the history of the tragedy which affected Ottoman citizens during World War I” (Lowry 1989).

Finally, another new theme was the argument that international bodies and other states’ moves to recognize the Armenian Genocide would ‘legitimize terrorism’ and “lend support to international terrorism” (Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal, as quoted in *New York Times* 1984). And while Armenian terrorism had ended by the mid-1980s, the Turkish government continued to argue

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<sup>325</sup> Here it seems like Evren is referring to the domestic political and civil turmoil that was widespread in Turkey in the late 1970s, implying that Armenians saw this as an opportunity to take advantage of Turkey’s weakness.

<sup>326</sup> Su and Mumcu 1983: 117-118; Parmaksızoğlu 1988: 115; Şenünver et al. 1989: 89. In addition, Armenians’ presence in the Ottoman Empire, and some of their contributions to the social, economic and political life of the empire were briefly mentioned in textbooks in this phase, emphasizing that they were well-treated and happy before Armenian nationalist aspirations arose. Speeches and official statements similarly noted that Armenians had been treated with tolerance and had not experienced discrimination in the Ottoman Empire. For example, in a February 1987 statement, the Turkish Foreign Ministry declared: “Throughout their history the Turkish Republic and people have proved their respect for all religions and cultural trends” (*Ankara Domestic Service* 1987a).

that recognizing the genocide would be a concession to terrorists, claiming that Kurdish (PKK) terrorism was related to Armenian terrorism (*Reuters News* 1989b; Owen-Davies 1989).<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> For a scathing critique of the claim by Turkish officials that Armenians were involved in the PKK's activities, which was published in the Kurdish newspaper *Özgür Gündem*, see: Yüce 1993.

– Chapter 5 –  
**Limited Acknowledgement and Retrenchment (1994 – 2008)**

“Yesterday, some in Congress wanted to play hardball, ... I can assure you, Turkey knows how to play hardball.”

-- Egemen Bağış, foreign policy advisor to Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Fall 2007<sup>328</sup>

***Introduction***

This chapter continues my analysis of the trajectory of Turkey’s narrative of the Armenian Genocide, covering the latter two phases in Turkey’s narrative, from 1994 through to 2008. In this period, there were major structural changes in both the domestic and international contexts, challenges to the official narrative from within the domestic sphere, and intensified pressure from foreign states’ and international bodies’ increasing recognition of the genocide. As a result, the content of Turkey’s narrative shifted somewhat, no longer silencing and outright denying the events of the genocide, and coming to acknowledge basic facts about the events. The changes in these phases illustrate how structural and international factors can be important triggers of change, while also showing the insufficiency of these factors in seeking to understand the timing and content of change. Furthermore, the developments in Phase Four draw attention to the potential for change to arise in response to domestic activism and challenges to the official narrative. At the same time, however, there were significant continuities in the narrative throughout this period, both in the content of the narrative and especially in the strategies used to support and disseminate the official narrative. In addition, Turkish officials’ involvement in the defense and production of the official narrative continued and increased in this period, especially in Phase Four, and officials continued to involve societal actors in their efforts. Finally, these two phases demonstrate the role of feedback effects, particularly in reinforcing continuities in Turkey’s narrative.

***Phase Three (1994 – 2000): Subtle changes in the content of the narrative***

The third phase in the trajectory of Turkey’s official narrative was more of an interlude than a proper phase, given that the shift in the content of the narrative did not constitute a change on the continuum. Overall, the strategies employed to defend the official narrative were largely continued from Phase Two, although the energy devoted to these efforts waned in this phase. I have included this period from 1994 through to the end of 2000 as a separate phase, however, for two reasons. *First*, there were subtle shifts in the content of the narrative, some of which previewed themes that fully emerged in the fourth phase. In particular, official arguments in a few instances referred not just to ‘Armenians’ claims,’ but were also directed against claims that there had been massacres or genocides of Greeks and Assyrians. Overall, in communications directed at domestic audiences, the tone of the official narrative was slightly more virulent in this

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<sup>328</sup> As quoted in an article published by the *Southern Poverty Law Center* (Holthouse 2008).



phase; whereas in communications directed at international audiences, the arguments made in this phase were more measured and clinical.

The *second* reason I have defined this as a separate phase is that the factors that prompted these slight shifts in tone and content were different from the factors that prompted the changes in the second phase. The end of the Cold War, the creation of an independent Republic of Armenia, and the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan were major changes that influenced the content of the official narrative in this and the subsequent phase. In addition, the taboo on the discussion of this issue within Turkey began to be challenged in this period. Despite these momentous changes, however, the shifts in the narrative were quite modest, which highlights the stickiness of the narrative, the role of official and societal actors in reinforcing continuities in the narrative, and the limitations of international factors in effecting change in the narrative.

### *The context in the early 1990s*

Internationally, the end of the Cold War altered the international context that had structurally supported Turkey's position on the Armenian Genocide in two key ways. First, it prompted a shift in the foreign policy priorities of Turkey's key ally, the US. Second, it introduced a new state into the politics surrounding the Armenian Genocide. At the same time, Turkey's domestic politics were equally tumultuous throughout the 1990s, with the Kurdish conflict in the southeast at its height, human rights and rule of law severely strained, civilian politics gradually revealed as corrupt and ineffectual, and the military reasserting its authority to shape Turkey's politics and society. As a result, the precariousness of the 1990s partially explains why Turkey's narrative did not change substantially in this period, in spite of the structural changes outlined above (and below).<sup>329</sup>

#### The international context

The Republic of Armenia declared its independence from the Soviet Union in September 1991, and formally became an independent state in December 1991. While Turkey recognized the new Republic of Armenia upon its independence in 1991, and initial relations were reportedly positive, Turkish officials were attentive to the potential for Armenia's independence to create new problems vis-à-vis the Armenian question. Reflecting this, in early 1991, Turkey reportedly requested that Armenia not commemorate the genocide on April 24<sup>th</sup> of that year, at the same time that it offered to help Armenia's economic development (Cekirge 1991). Moreover, while Turkey established formal diplomatic relations with the other former Soviet republics in the Caucasus, this process was held up with Armenia, first because of Turkey's concern that Armenia might make claims on Turkish territory (*Turkish Daily News* 1992; Görgülü 2008: 11), and then because of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh (*Ankara Türkiye Radyoları Network* 1992; Cowell 1992). As the conflict worsened, opinions in Turkey turned sharply against Armenia. At first Turkey drew back from previous agreements with Armenia, and in April 1993 Turkey formally severed diplomatic relations and closed its border with Armenia (Bagci 2000). Since then, the issue of the genocide has become

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<sup>329</sup> A Washington Post article (Randal 1990) from July 1990 aptly captures the fears and concerns that these monumental changes raised for Turkish officials at the time.

intertwined with the normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia, and Turkey has used the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to rhetorically support its narrative of the genocide.

Also in this period, there were notable developments in Turkey's relations with Israel and with the European Union. Following the re-establishment of diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level with Israel in 1991, close military and intelligence ties developed between Turkey and Israel, often in conjunction with the US. On the Armenian question, this continued to reap rewards in the form of Israeli support for Turkey's denial of the genocide – internationally, in Israel, and in the US Congress.

In addition, relations with the EU took one step forward and then one step back in this phase, first with the establishment of a Customs Union between the EU and Turkey at the end of 1995, and then with the European Council's decision to not open accession negotiations with Turkey in 1997, when many other countries' candidacies were given the red light. This rebuff led to an anti-European backlash in Turkey, but also indicated to some politicians that Turkey would need to take concrete steps in order to be accepted as a candidate country by the EU (Öktem 2011: 115).

Finally, the first Gulf War, which occurred as the Cold War came to a close, posed a challenge for Turkey in its relationship with the US. While the Turkish President Turgut Özal committed Turkish troops to the war effort and allowed the US to use Turkish bases during the war, the Turkish commitment was not appreciated as much as Özal had hoped. Moreover, Turkey was not compensated by the US (as had been promised) for its lost oil revenues from the sanctions imposed on Iraq or for its costs in participating in the war, and Turkey was left with thousands of Kurdish refugees in its territory in the aftermath of the war. As a result, these consequences reinforced Turkish leaders' (especially the military's) sense of the country's vulnerability, particularly in the context of the contemporaneous upheavals in so many aspects of international and domestic politics.<sup>330</sup>

### The domestic context

Throughout the 1990s, domestic politics in Turkey were somewhat in disarray. There was a series of weak coalition governments over the course of the decade (Öktem 2011: 84), and the military again reasserted its authority in Turkish politics in the so-called 'post-modern' coup of 28 February 1997. The coup was the military's response to the growing political weight of the Islamic political movement in Turkey. In the 1994 municipal elections, politicians from the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP) had come to power in several major Turkish cities, and in 1996, the RP formed a coalition government with the center-right True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi*, DYP) in which the RP's leader, Necmettin Erbakan, became Prime Minister. This coalition was only in power for a year, though, as the military intervened on 28 February 1997 to demand a series of reforms to combat 'radical Islam,' which was followed by a cascade of criticism and pressure on the coalition from the mainstream media and other societal actors. Within a few months, the coalition was dissolved, and the military began an intensive process to

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<sup>330</sup> In this paragraph I have drawn on Göçek's discussion of these events (2011: 162).

monitor and tamp down the perceived ‘threat’ from the growing scope of Islamic activities in Turkey.<sup>331</sup>

The ongoing conflict in Turkey’s southeast was a central feature of domestic politics throughout the decade, and was especially brutal in the mid-1990s. This conflict was waged between the PKK on one side, the Turkish military, police and intelligence units on the other side, with the Kurdish population in the region was squeezed between the two. As a result of the conflict, there were high levels of violence against civilians, soldiers, Kurdish rebels and political figures; widespread torture and atrocities; endemic corruption; massive internal displacement; and a huge wave of urbanization from this rural depopulation in the southeast (Öktem 2011: 88-96).<sup>332</sup> However, in response to these devastating consequences and in the context of the liberalization of the media (Göçek 2011: 31), in the late 1980s Turkish civil society began to awaken and to tentatively challenge some aspects of the state’s (read: the military’s) policies toward Kurds. These developments, in turn, gradually prompted some leftist activists to begin to draw attention to the Armenian question, as I describe below.

### *Independent variables prior to and during Phase Three*

#### International factors

In this period, there was somewhat of a lull in international pressures to recognize the genocide, with the European Parliament not taking up the issue again until 1999, and with the US Congress not considering a resolution to recognize the genocide between 1990 and 1998. That said, the US Congress attempted to pressure Turkey in the mid-1990s by cutting US economic assistance to Turkey, but over the issues of Turkey’s blockade of Armenia and Turkey’s human rights record. This shift in Congress’ attention from the genocide to Turkey’s relations with Armenia, and Congress’ willingness to impose concrete sanctions on Turkey were reflections of both the changing strategic context signaled by the end of the Cold War, as well as the priorities of Armenian-American lobbying groups in this period. Moreover, these were early signs of the increasing entanglement of the recognition of the genocide with Turkish-Armenian relations.

In addition, there was a new (albeit) weak source of international pressure in this phase. As Turkish officials had predicted, there were indications from some Armenian political actors – particularly politicians in the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktsutyun (ARF-D, or ARF) – that the existing border between the two countries was not fully settled.<sup>333</sup> Moreover,

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<sup>331</sup> On the 28 February process and the Western Working Group (*Batı Çalışma Grubu*) that was set up as a result of this process, see Öktem 2011: 106-10.

<sup>332</sup> Göçek writes that “what took place from 1984 to 1999 in southeastern Turkey between the Kurds and the Turkish state left in its wake a total of at least 70,000 casualties” (2011: 42). Moreover, “as of 1999, when the civil war finally ended, according to Turkish government estimates 3,236 settlements had been cleared in southeastern Turkey, forcibly displacing 362,915 persons” (*Ibid.*: 45).

<sup>333</sup> For example, “in a parliamentary debate in Yerevan in 2007, Vahan Hovhannisian, then deputy speaker of parliament and a leading ARF politician, described the 1921 Treaties of Kars and Moscow, which define the current border, as ‘illegal’ (despite their having been ratified) and called for ‘very serious diplomatic, legal work’ to revise them. Speaking at the same debate, Ara Papian, previously Yerevan’s ambassador to Canada, also rejected the validity of the two treaties, arguing instead that the 1920 Treaty of Sevres, which awarded Armenia a substantial part of eastern Anatolia (but was never ratified), remained in force” (ESI 2009: 24).

Armenian officials annually commemorated the genocide, along with taking visiting foreign leaders to visit the Tsitsernakaberd Armenian Genocide memorial in Yerevan. And yet, while these developments reinforced the fears of Turkish officials and are one of the two reasons for the continued closed border and frozen relations between the two countries, the relative weakness of Armenia vis-à-vis Turkey has limited the impact of these pressures. In a reflection of the importance Turkish officials accord to such pressures, in October 1998, in response to a speech in which the Armenian Prime Minister called on Turkey to “admit it massacred 1.5 million Armenians in World War I,” the Turkish Ambassador to the US, Baki İlkin stated: “‘If they want to establish good relations with Turkey, Armenia is in no position to place preconditions’” (Morrison 1998).

### Domestic activism in the early 1990s: Chipping away at the wall of silence

In the early 1990s, a small number of civil society actors began to address the Armenian question and/or the situation of Armenians and other minorities in contemporary Turkey in ways that challenged the official narrative.

In the early 1990s, a handful of publishing houses in Turkey began to publish books on the history of the Armenian Genocide, on aspects of the Armenian question and/or on Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and/or contemporary Turkey.<sup>334</sup> The first critical academic work on the Armenian question was published in 1992. It was the historian Taner Akçam’s book *Türk ulusal kimliği ve Ermeni sorunu* [*Turkish national identity and the Armenian question*], which was highly critical of the official Turkish narrative of the Armenian Genocide (Akçam 1992). The following year (in 1993), the human rights activist-owners of *Belge Yayınları* (Belge Publications), Ayşe Nür and Ragıp Zarakolu, released a book titled *Ermeni Tabusu* [*The Armenian Taboo*] on the history of the Armenian Genocide (Ternon 1993).<sup>335</sup> Since 1990, Belge had been publishing books that challenged the official narrative of the Kurdish question, and in 1992 the Zarakolus decided that they needed to publish something on the Armenian question, which they perceived to be linked to the Kurdish question in historical and rhetorical terms.<sup>336</sup> Also in 1993, Aras Yayıncılık was founded. Aras is a small, publishing house that publishes the literature of and books about the lives of Armenians in Turkey, both currently and in the past, and in both Turkish and Armenian. One interviewee thought that Aras has contributed to the broadening of the space for discussion of and knowledge of Armenians in Turkey and the lives of Armenians in Turkey, since many people in Turkey didn’t know anything about Armenians before.<sup>337</sup> In particular, in the early 1990s, Aras began to publish Turkish translations of Turkish-Armenian literature. While it only published a couple of books in the first few years, in the latter half of the decade Aras published at least a dozen more Turkish translations of Armenian

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<sup>334</sup> The first publishers to do so were: İletişim Yayınları (starting in 1992), Belge Yayınları (starting in 1993), Aras Yayıncılık (starting in 1993), and Peri Yayınları (starting in 1994). Interestingly and perhaps not surprisingly, of these four publishers, two might be said to focus on issues and literature of particular ‘minority’ groups, since Aras publishes works in Armenian and translates Armenian works into Turkish, and Peri mostly publishes books related to Kurdish history, politics and literature.

<sup>335</sup> This book was a translation of Yves Ternon’s 1977 book, *Les Arméniens: Histoire d’un génocide* [*The Armenians: History of a genocide*].

<sup>336</sup> Moreover, there had been some positive developments with regard to the Kurdish question, and so the Zarakolus perceived there to be a political opening at that time.

<sup>337</sup> Author’s interview with intellectual in Turkey [T-12], Istanbul, May 2008.

literature, including the work of diaspora Armenian writers, as well as Turkish-Armenian writers whose work had previously only appeared in Armenian.<sup>338</sup> As Göçek notes in the introduction to her analysis of this literature, these translated works can be seen as “significant as they present unauthorized remembrances of the past” (2011: 192). Moreover, she reveals how these works both exposed gaps and inconsistencies in the state’s narratives – of the events of 1915 and other national narratives – and also demonstrated how Turkish-Armenians’ lives were *a part of* the fabric of Turkish history and society (Göçek 2011: 185-210). Finally, the first book on the Armenian Genocide that had the word ‘genocide’ in its title was published in 1994 by Peri Yayınları (Kalman 1994). A year later, in 1995, Belge also published a book that included the word ‘genocide’ in its title. This book was a translation of an article by the sociologist Vahakn Dadrian (Dadrian 1995b). The publishers consciously included the word genocide in the title of this book, which they chose to publish as a form of ‘civil disobedience.’ They wanted to show the Turkish government that they would not be deterred from publishing books on the Armenian question, despite their prosecution and conviction in 1995 for publishing Yves Ternon’s book.

At the same time, activism related to the Armenian question began to emerge, but was relatively limited in this initial phase. In January 1994, a small group of activists in the Istanbul branch of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (*İnsan Hakları Derneği*, İHD)<sup>339</sup> formed a subgroup focused on human rights for minorities in Turkey. The subgroup was called the Minority Rights Monitoring Commission (*Azınlık Hakları İzleme Komisyonu*).<sup>340</sup> The commission was quite small, and its members met once a month. At each meeting, they were introduced to a minority group, or gathered information about a particular problem. In this way, they gradually learned more about different minority groups in Turkey and about the problems they faced, since at the time few Turks (including the members of this commission) knew about minorities in Turkey, since it was a tabooed subject.<sup>341</sup> In addition to educating themselves, the members of this commission also prepared materials for the public. In 1994-5, the commission prepared a report on the problems faced by ethnic and religious minorities in Turkey, in 1996 they organized the first exhibit in Turkey on the 6-7 September 1955 pogroms of Greeks (and other minorities), and in 1996 they prepared an exhibition about the Turkish government’s policy of confiscating properties from non-Muslim minority foundations, which was made into a book that was published in 2000 (*Tuzla Ermeni Çocuk Kampı* 2000).<sup>342</sup>

Also in this period the Armenian question was first discussed critically in the Turkish media, albeit to a limited extent. Yelda was one of the first Turkish journalists to begin to write about Armenians and other minorities along lines that were not consistent with – and at times directly challenged – the official narrative, which put the first cracks in the taboo surrounding the topic in

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<sup>338</sup> These numbers, which are admittedly incomplete, come from my counting of the books listed in the footnotes to Göçek’s chapter on this literature (2011: 269-71).

<sup>339</sup> İHD is a prominent Turkish human rights organization that was founded in 1986 and focuses on human rights and freedom of expression in Turkey, and particularly on the situation of Kurds in Turkey.

<sup>340</sup> Author’s interview with activist in Turkey [T-4], Istanbul, May 2008.

<sup>341</sup> Author’s interview with civil society actor in Turkey [T-2], Istanbul, May 2008. For a brief description of how the group would go about the process of learning about a given minority group – in this case, Armenians – see: Köker 1995.

<sup>342</sup> Author’s interview with civil society actor [T-13], Istanbul, March 2009.

the Turkish media.<sup>343</sup> Between 1995 and 1997, she wrote a regular column in a weekly magazine, and in many articles in this column and elsewhere, she wrote about Armenians in Turkey (and abroad), often intertwining discussions of Armenians' lives and pasts with references to the *tehcir* and particular families' histories and suffering in the deportation. Moreover, Yelda frequently referred to the 'Armenian genocide' (*Ermeni soykırımı*) in her articles, without quotes and without the insertion of the expression 'so-called' (*sözde*).<sup>344</sup> In this period, critical articles on the topic of the Armenian question also appeared in the Kurdish newspaper, *Özgür Gündem* (e.g., Yüce 1993), which one activist told me was for a long time the *only* newspaper that would publish articles by the small group of activists who were interested in challenging official narratives in regarding non-Muslim minorities.<sup>345</sup> And yet, as Göçek describes, strong economic, legal and ideological incentives meant that the mainstream Turkish media largely refrained from challenging state policies and narratives, especially on issues like the Armenian question (2011: 180).

In addition, in 1996, the (late) Turkish-Armenian journalist and activist Hrant Dink founded *Agos*, which is a weekly newspaper that is published in both Turkish and Armenian. It covers issues in and of interest to the small community of Turkish-Armenians, but also covers more general issues in Turkish politics and society. While *Agos*'s readership was quite small before Dink's assassination in January 2007,<sup>346</sup> Hrant Dink himself had a significant impact within Turkey. According to one activist, Hrant Dink was the first Turkish-Armenian who was prominently in the Turkish public sphere, and people fell in love with him, in particular because people believed that he was sincere. As most Turkish-Armenians avoided being involved in this issue, Dink was the first to draw attention to injustices to Armenians in Turkey.<sup>347</sup>

Before drawing this section to a close, there are two points of note about this first phase of activism on the Armenian question. *First*, some of this early, critical Turkish activism on the Armenian question involved connections with actors in other countries, especially France, Germany and the United States. For instance, Ragıp Zarakolu describes how, in the latter half of the 1990s, he and a small group of activists and academics were invited to visit and speak in Yerevan, Paris and Germany; and how they developed formative connections with Turkish, Armenian and other activists in these countries (2008b: 19-22). And *second*, a certain portion of the activists who began to work on issues related to minorities, Armenians, and the Armenian question in the 1990s were first inspired to do so as they started to see the connections between the state's approaches to the Kurdish question and the Armenian question. While this is certainly

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<sup>343</sup> Author's interview with civil society actor [T-21b], Istanbul, April 2009. Another interviewee told me that Yelda had tried to convince people that an institute focusing on the Armenian question should be established at Bilgi University in the early 1990s. But, the interviewee noted that it was too early for this, so it did not happen (Author's interview with researcher [T-22b], Istanbul, April 2009.)

<sup>344</sup> For an example of a piece by Yelda that directly challenged the official narrative, see: Yelda 2000 [1996]: 27-31. For a selection of Yelda's articles on Armenians and other minorities, many of which were published in this weekly column, see: Yelda 2000 [1996]. According to the human rights activist Ayşe Günaysu, Yelda's work was groundbreaking and inspiring for other leftist activists (Günaysu 2008).

<sup>345</sup> Author's interview with activist in Turkey [T-4], Istanbul, May 2008.

<sup>346</sup> One interviewee noted that *Agos* was not widely known or read before Dink's death, when it was primarily read by Turkish-Armenians and a small group of leftists. Paradoxically, Hrant Dink's death made *Agos* more widely known (Author's interview with activist in Turkey [T-4], Istanbul, May 2008).

<sup>347</sup> Author's interview with activist in Turkey [T-4], Istanbul, May 2008.

not the case across the board, two of the activists that I interviewed emphasized this point.<sup>348</sup> Moreover, a small number of Kurdish activists also began to draw connections between the Kurdish and Armenian questions, some even earlier than this. The activist Ayşe Günaysu has emphasized this in her writing, as has the political scientist Bilgin Ayata. For example, Günaysu pointed out, in a 2009 piece in the *Armenian Weekly*, that “The Kurds, some of whom actively took part in the Armenian Genocide, were also the first in Turkey to talk and write about the genocide of the Armenians and Assyrians” (Gunaysu 2009c). As an example, she refers to the Kurdish intellectual and publisher Recep Maraşlı, who began to compile a pamphlet about the Armenian Genocide in 1982, while he was imprisoned after the 1980 coup. He shared this pamphlet with his fellow Kurdish inmates, and continued to expand it as he read and learned more over the years (many of which were spent in prison for his writing and activism on the Kurdish question), culminating in a massive book on the topic that was published in 2008.<sup>349</sup>

In sum, while the small group of activists and others who began to pay attention to and work on the Armenian question in this period were primarily speaking to and educating each other, and had not yet gained the attention of a wider portion of the Turkish public, this was a crucial early step. One interviewee noted that whereas there used to be no one who was interested in or knew anything about the Armenian question or about the problems of Armenians in Turkey, gradually there has emerged a group of activists who know about, talk about and are concerned about this issue. And while at first there might have been one or two people, very slowly their activities touched others and got others interested in these issues. Gradually, this initially small group of activists has affected the official narrative by challenging it, offering an opposition narrative, and opening up debate on the official narrative.<sup>350</sup> Thus, while this process was not fully realized until Phase Four, the importance of these early developments was captured in a recent essay by Ragıp Zarakolu, who wrote that, “for the first time, the ‘genocide’ approach/perspective to the events of 1915 in Turkey was presented to Turkish readers” (2008b: 18 – my translation).

Finally and importantly, this initial period of activism was not unopposed or unnoticed, either by the state or by nationalists in Turkey. Thus, the Zarakolus were prosecuted and convicted under Article 8 of the Anti-terror law for the publication of Ternon’s book in the genocide in 1993, and two years later they were tried (and acquitted) under Article 216 of the new Turkish Penal Code for the publication of Dadrian’s piece. In 1999, when the İHD’s Minority Rights Monitoring Commission’s exhibition about the state’s confiscation of the property of the Tuzla Armenian Children’s Camp was set up in Ankara, it was physically attacked and a court case was (unsuccessfully) brought against İHD under the Law of Associations.<sup>351</sup> Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the fact that no paper other than *Gündem* would publish articles about minorities is a telling reflection of the self-censorship prevalent in the mainstream media at the

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<sup>348</sup> Author’s interview with civil society actor [T-21b], Istanbul, April 2009; Author’s interview with activist in Turkey [T-4], Istanbul, May 2008. See also: the article by the activist Ayşe Günaysu, who writes: “The Kurdish issue liberated some of us from party lines and the orthodox Marxist class approach, giving rise to an awareness of the nationalist essence of the traditional left in Turkey and how it helped the establishment cover up certain truths about our past—the terrible demographic engineering and its consequences manifested in ordinary everyday racism, to which we had become so accustomed that we weren’t even aware of its existence. Then we were able to notice that we were living side by side with the victims of this commonplace racism without really seeing them” (2008).

<sup>349</sup> This information about Maraşlı is drawn from Gunaysu 2009c, and also from Ayata 2009.

<sup>350</sup> Author’s interview with intellectual in Turkey [T-12], Istanbul, May 2008.

<sup>351</sup> Author’s interview with activist in Turkey [T-4], Istanbul, May 2008.

time, which can be understood to derive from socialization to the official narrative, along with fear of prosecution or other sanctions that might arise from transgressing this taboo.

*The dependent variable: Subtle changes amid continuity*

### Strategic continuity

The strategies and arguments developed in the early 1980s were applied throughout the decade and into the 1990s. As a result, there were no significant changes in the strategies used in the 1990s: textbooks continued to cover the issue, government officials continued to produce and disseminate articulations of the official narrative, and Turkish diplomats abroad continued to cultivate support for the official position from a range of sectors. In fact, the attention and resources dedicated to the issue declined somewhat in the late 1980s, as attested both by trends in publications (see below) and in the account of the retired Ambassador Ömer Engin Lütem, who wrote:

“Armenian terror reached its peak in 1983, and soon thereafter steeply declined before coming to a complete halt. Parallel to these developments, the writers discussing the Armenian problem in the Turkish media were first reduced and then became rarely visible. In short, the decrease in terrorist actions diminished the interest of the Turkish public opinion in this subject ... . A similar development was seen in Turkish statesmen, for they began to view Armenian terror as a subject which belonged to the past. This situation prompted a gradual decrease in the ... precautions and activities against the Armenian terror and accusations” (2008: 42).

Because continuity was the dominant trend in this phase, I will only note the few exceptions to that trend. One notable development was that the number of official publications and the number of government agencies publishing books on this topic both *doubled* in the latter half of the 1990s. Thus, between 1996 and 2000, six separate government offices<sup>352</sup> published a total of fifteen books on the Armenian question.<sup>353</sup> These figures are striking when compared with the three government offices that had published books on the topic in each of the three prior five-year periods (i.e., 1981-5, 1986-90, 1991-5), and compared to the average of six books that had been published on the topic in each of the three prior five-year periods. In contrast, however, the rate of quasi-official publications dipped noticeably in this phase. Whereas 24 quasi-official publications were released in the 1980s,<sup>354</sup> only 6 were published between 1991 and 2000.<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> The government agencies that published books on the topic between 1996 and 2000 were: the military archives, the Prime Minister’s state archives, the Directorate General of Press and Information (which was in the Prime Minister’s Office), the Atatürk Research Center (which was also in the Prime Minister’s Office), the Center for Strategic Research (which is within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

<sup>353</sup> The official publications were: Demirel 1996; Güler 1996; *Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Kafkaslar’da ve Anadolu’da Ermeni Mezâlimi (Vol III)* 1997; Ataöv 1997; Akbulut 1998; *Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Kafkaslar’da ve Anadolu’da Ermeni Mezâlimi, Vol. IV* 1998; *Ermeni İddiaları ve Tarihi Gerçekler* 1998; Li 1998; *Armenian Atrocities* 1999; *I. Dünya savaşı sırasında Ermenilerin Türklere yaptığı katliam* 2000; Türkdoğan 2000; Çalık 2000; Çaycı 2000; *Dış Basında Sözde Ermeni Soykırımı İddiaları Değerlendirmesi* 2000; Sonyel 2000.

<sup>354</sup> These were published either by the Turkish Historical Society or by a private publisher but with extensive involvement and support from Turkish officials.

<sup>355</sup> See Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4 for a graphic representation of these trends.



Another interesting shift was in the area of education. As in the previous phase, the National Education Ministry continued to cover the Armenian question in textbooks, and continued to direct schools, teachers, universities and researchers to work on, discuss and hold conferences about the Armenian question. And yet, in 1999 the government sent a letter to schools indicating that Greeks, Armenians and Assyrians wanted to divide the country,<sup>356</sup> and it also created a program to prepare teachers to answer questions about allegations of massacres or genocide of these groups (*Ozgur Politika* 2003). While this broadened scope was consistent with the founding narrative of the Republic and with the narratives of unity and divisive threats, the shift was in the explicit reference to allegations of genocide or massacres against all of these groups.

In addition, the government's commemorative actions changed somewhat in this phase. In the prior phase, commemorations had remembered Armenian massacres of and terror attacks against Turks. In contrast, in October 1999 the Turkish government opened a museum and monument in Iğdır (in eastern Turkey) that commemorated the Armenian *genocide* committed against Turks (*BBC Monitoring European* 1999). A number of top government, regional and local officials attended and spoke at the opening ceremony, including the President Süleyman Demirel and the Chief of the General Staff Hüseyin Kivrikoğlu (Ayata 2009). In addition to its name and purpose, the design of the monument is also notable. Ayata writes that: "It is an aggressive, nationalistic, and outright hostile monument that is strategically located on the road from Iğdır to the Armenian border" (2009). Moreover, there are two features that contrast with commemorations in the prior phase. One is that this monument and museum commemorate the 'genocide' of Turks by Armenians,<sup>357</sup> which is an escalation of the counter-claims made in the official narrative. And the second notable aspect of this commemoration is that – as the highest monument in Turkey – it is truly *monumental*.<sup>358</sup>

### Changes in the content of the narrative

Overall, the content of the narrative was not significantly different from in the previous phase. That said, while there were strong continuities in the content of the narrative, several differences appeared in official statements and in textbooks in this phase.<sup>359</sup>

A key theme that continued in this phase was the argument that what had happened was not a genocide. Moreover, one of the reasons most commonly advanced in support of this argument continued to be that Armenians had died in a civil war, *not* in a genocide. For example, in a letter sent to members of the US Congress in 1994, Nüzhet Kandemir, who was the Turkish Ambassador to the US, "argued that 'what happened during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1915 was a civil war - not genocide - during which both sides lost lives, due to Armenian collaboration with the invading Russian army and their intention to carve an autonomous Armenian state out of Anatolia'" (Morrison 1994).

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<sup>356</sup> Author's interview with civil society actor [T-6], Ankara, April 2008.

<sup>357</sup> The Provincial Governor, Şemsettin Uzun, whose idea it had been to build the monument, estimated that "between 1915 and 1920 about 80,000 people in Iğdır were bloodthirstily murdered by Armenians" (Türkdoğan 1999 – my translation).

<sup>358</sup> See also the book published by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism about this museum: Uzundere 2002. For more information on the creation of the monument and museum, see also: Türkdoğan 1999.

<sup>359</sup> My discussion of the content in textbooks is based on my analysis of three high school history textbooks published between 1994 and 2000. These textbooks are listed in Appendix 1.

Beyond this overall continuity, however, there were two changes in the supporting arguments that were offered. First, an argument that had been fairly common in the previous phase – that to call the deaths of Armenians a genocide would dilute the memory of the victims of the Holocaust and the strength of the term genocide – was *not* frequently offered in this phase. There are three possible considerations behind this shift. One is that by the late 1990s Turkish officials had already secured the support of Israel and Jewish groups, so this argument was not as necessary as in the prior phase, when Turkish officials were trying to win this important source of support. Second, following the 1994 Rwandan genocide and the 1995 genocide in Srebrenica, and also as a result of the development of the field of comparative genocide studies (from the early 1980s), the argument that the Holocaust was unique and could not be compared with other cases of genocide was less salient by the mid-1990s.<sup>360</sup> And third, by the mid- to late-1990s, there was mounting evidence attesting to the genocidal nature of the deportation. As a result, Turkish officials' arguments began to shift in two ways: for domestic audiences, the official counter-narratives became more virulent; while for international audiences, the arguments were more clinical, beginning to focus more on definitional dimensions of genocide.

Related to this last point, starting in 1998, officials began to note that the Ottoman authorities had never had a plan for or policy of genocide. An example of this is a statement issued in May 1998 by the Turkish Foreign Ministry, which emphasized that what had happened: “‘was a great tragedy but it also affected other populations of the Ottoman empire, including Turks. There never existed any plan for a genocide’” (*Agence France-Presse* 1998). This marked a new reason for why the term genocide was not applicable in this case.

Another slight difference that emerged in this phase was that the deportation was acknowledged in official statements somewhat more often than in the previous phase, although references to it were still brief and oblique. For example, in a letter sent to the French President in 1998, the Turkish President Süleyman Demirel referred to “the settlement of Armenians in regions outside the war zone” (*BBC Monitoring Service* 1998). And in April 1999, the Turkish Consul General in Los Angeles described the events as follows: “‘Ottoman authorities took all the Armenians and sent them to Syria on foot. Many of them died along the way. This is what happened due to World War I and a civil war. It wasn’t a genocide’” (Condon 1999). Similarly, the deportation decision was mentioned in all of the textbooks that I analyzed in this phase, in contrast to its being mentioned in only half of the textbooks in the 1980s and early 1990s. Moreover, the deportation was more strongly defended in these textbooks. For example, a 1995 textbook stated: “The Turkish nation definitely cannot be and should not be held responsible for what happened in the course of the Armenians’ migration” (Palazoğlu and Bircan 1995: 145).

Echoing the stronger language included in and communicated by the Armenian Genocide Monument and Museum that was opened in Iğdır in late 1999, textbooks in this period also bolstered the correctness of the ‘deportation decision’ with greater emphasis on both the violence and the territorial ambitions of Armenians. For instance, a 1995 textbook described the role of

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<sup>360</sup> One interviewee made this point, arguing that, when this theme first emerged in the official narrative in the early 1980s, it was intended for Jewish audiences, especially abroad in the US and in Israel. But, this interviewee argued that foreign audiences are no longer as persuaded by this argument, due to academic research on the Holocaust and on other cases of genocide, with the result that the argument is now mainly directed at domestic audiences, and with a different intention (Author’s interview with researcher [T-22b], Istanbul, April 2009.)

the Russians in inciting nationalism in Ottoman Armenians, but then noted the following: “By then, it was very easy to incite the Armenians; as a matter of fact, this is what happened. The leaders of the ‘Armenian committees’ that had been established were specially trained in Russia. With these armed gangs, which were so crazed that they attempted to assassinate the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II, the Armenian problem grew and continued” (Kalecikli 1994: 134).<sup>361</sup> Moreover, other official sources also emphasized Armenians’ violence more than in the previous phase. For example, the introduction to a book of documents that was published by the Prime Minister’s state archives in 1995 declared that “These documents show that it was not the Turks who slaughtered Armenians, as the Armenians insist, but rather just the opposite, the Armenians slaughtered Turks, and this truth is shown clearly in the documents.”<sup>362</sup> And in June 1998, President Demirel argued that “in 1915, the Armenians, provoked by outside forces, rebelled against the Ottoman state, resorting to extreme violence against the civilian population and the state forces” (*BBC Monitoring Service* 1998).

Also in this phase, textbooks represented Armenians as traitors, which was a change in kind from depictions in earlier textbooks. In Phase Two, Armenians were described in textbooks as rising up against the Ottoman authorities and attacking Turks and Turkish villages, but these actions were not typically identified as betrayal or treachery. In contrast, textbooks in Phase Three accused Armenians of betrayal, noting that they tried to take advantage of the weakness of the Ottoman Empire and that they “stabbed Turks in the back.” For example, a 1994 textbook declared that “in the period of the National Struggle [i.e., in the post-WWI period], underground organizations cooperated with foreign states in order to stab the Turks in the back” (Kalecikli 1994: 48).<sup>363</sup>

Going a step further, the textbooks in this phase characterized the Armenian question as part of a set of lies, games and propaganda used to weaken Turkey and undermine its sovereignty.<sup>364</sup> For example, a textbook published in 1994 prefaced a discussion of the Great Power states’ postwar plans with this statement: “Propaganda that had continued for hundreds of years in the world had shown Turks as cruel and lacking the qualities of civilized human beings, and as not being capable of self-government. The Entente States, profiting from this propaganda, while thinking of introducing an independent or autonomous area for the communities that had lived for ages under the Turks’ administration, were preparing a future that could not be accepted by the Turks” (Kalecikli 1994: 47).<sup>365</sup> Similarly, a 1995 textbook cautioned: “it would probably be an

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<sup>361</sup> Notably, in this passage Armenians were referred to as ‘armed gangs.’ This phrase appeared several times in reference to Armenian rebellions and attacks, and painted Armenians in a more treacherous manner than in earlier textbooks.

<sup>362</sup> *Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Kafkaslar’da ve Anadolu’da Ermeni Mezâlimi* 1995, as quoted in Hovannisian 1999a: 217.

<sup>363</sup> Elsewhere, this same textbook stated: “Greeks and Armenians, who for hundreds of years as Turkish citizens had lived in tranquility and had benefited from all kinds of opportunities from the state, took advantage of the bad situation into which the Ottoman State had fallen, cooperated with the occupying states and worked to break up our lands. ... The Armenian Revenge Regiment, which had been established in Adana with the help of the French, started large-scale massacres. The goal of these massacres was to establish an independent State of Armenia in Eastern Anatolia” (Palazoğlu and Bircan 1995: 40).

<sup>364</sup> On this theme in Turkish textbooks, see: Altınay 2004a: 136.

<sup>365</sup> This 1994 textbook likewise insinuated that other states have falsely accused Turkey. In reference to an article in the Treaty of Sèvres concerning ‘Minority Rights,’ the textbook said that “Rights were given to all minorities which were more excessive than the rights of Turks and were more than the rights of every nation. This situation

appropriate thought and behavior to examine and consider with an unbiased eye the experience and situation of Armenians who lived here as Ottoman citizens. Because on this subject, there are baseless claims and propaganda directed against Turks and against the Turkish State” (Palazoğlu and Bircan 1995: 144).<sup>366</sup>

Finally, in terms of continuities, official statements continued to argue that many Turks had also died at the time, and that to talk only about Armenian deaths was one-sided.<sup>367</sup> In addition, officials continued to argue that this was an issue that should be addressed by historians, not by politicians.<sup>368</sup> Interestingly, however, some statements went a step further, arguing that research had refuted these allegations or that documents in the Ottoman and other archives had shown that these allegations were unfounded.<sup>369</sup>

### Feedback effects

In this phase there were several indications of feedback effects, most of which reinforced continuities in the official narrative. This was most notable in the continuities in the strategies and in the content of the official narrative in this period. These continuities were in spite of some significant shifts in the international context and new challenges domestically, and despite the formal end of the military’s control over politics (at least until early 1997, when there was a ‘soft coup’). These continuities offers indications of the institutional ‘stickiness’ of these strategies, and of Turkish officials’ commitment to the official narrative, which was in part due to their socialization through their ongoing production of the narrative itself.

In addition, as in earlier phases, retired diplomats continued to work on and speak publicly on the Armenian question after leaving the Foreign Ministry, which most often reinforced elements of the official narrative and helped Turkish officials and institutions continue to reproduce the official narrative. Moreover, the support that Turkish officials had cultivated continued to reap returns in this phase, with the continued active support of Turkish-American groups, academics and many Jewish organizations in the United States. Notably, in an indication of how these societal agents could take on their own agency, toward the end of this phase the chairman of the Assembly of Turkish-American Associations criticized Turkish officials, calling on them to dedicate more resources to fighting recognition of ‘the alleged genocide’ in the US. He further argued that ““Turkey will never be able to cope with such troubles through resorting to political bargaining, unless it also devises substantial policies”” (*Turkish Daily News* 2000c), which was a call for renewed attention to the issue that was heeded by Turkish officials in the next phase.

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demonstrates how the claims of states that for years were the defenders of human rights were far from the truth on this topic” (Kalecikli 1994: 128).

<sup>366</sup> Another passage in the 1994 textbook explicitly linked the Ottoman government’s 1915 deportation decision to a series of imperialist provocations, games and terrorism that extended from Armenian attacks during WWI, to Armenian terrorism against Turkish diplomats in the 1970s and 1980s, to Kurdish nationalist terrorism within Turkey that started in the 1980s, and up to the recent conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the territorial enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh (Kalecikli 1994: 136-137).

<sup>367</sup> For example, in 1998 the Turkish President Suleyman Demirel argued in a letter to the French President that, as a result of Armenians’ rebellion, “both sides sustained significant casualties” (*BBC Monitoring Service* 1998).

<sup>368</sup> For example, in an interview in 1995, the Turkish Ambassador to the US, Nüzhet Kandemir emphasized that “historians, not Congress, will decide what happened” (Morrison 1995).

<sup>369</sup> E.g., *Turkish Daily News* 1998; *BBC Monitoring Service* 1998; *Turkish Daily News* 1999.

And finally, in spite of the emergence of domestic challenges to the official narrative in this phase, the limited nature of this initial activism was a reflection of the still deeply-engrained acceptance of the official narrative among the vast majority of the Turkish public, and of the ways in which the dissemination of the official narrative and its framing had prevented potential challenges from even being considered, and especially from being undertaken, by the vast majority of groups within Turkish society. Tellingly, the few publishers, activists and writers that did challenge the official narrative in this period included many individuals who were already involved in activism that challenged the state's taboos and national narratives in other areas.

#### ***Phase Four (2001 – 2008<sup>370</sup>): Rhetorical accommodations amid renewed defenses***

In this phase the official narrative shifted one step along the continuum, continuing to mythmake about and relativize the events, but no longer silencing the events. Moreover, the official narrative began to acknowledge certain basic facts about the genocide. These changes were made by Turkish officials, primarily in response to two factors: international pressure in the form of increased international recognition of the genocide, particularly in 1999 and 2000, and the broadening of domestic challenges to and questioning of the official narrative. In making these changes, Turkish officials largely drew on the same set of strategies to defend and disseminate the official narrative that had been developed in Phase Two, and again drew on support from societal actors within Turkey and internationally. The replication of these strategies highlights how Turkish officials 'learned' a repertoire of actions in the 1980s, which they successfully redeployed in this phase.

##### *The domestic and international context*

There were two key contextual factors in this phase. The first was the EU's acceptance of Turkey as a formal candidate for membership in December 1999, followed by the opening of accession negotiations with Turkey in October 2005. The second was the coming to power of the Justice and Development Party following the November 2002 election, which has led to a series of important reforms and changes in Turkish politics. In addition, over the past five years, Turkey and Armenia have engaged in an ongoing process of rapprochement, but which has not yet resulted in diplomatic normalization.

##### *The domestic context*

Prior to the election on 3 November 2002, there were several notable developments in Turkish politics. First, the Kurdish conflict, in which the PKK had been engaged in a devastating civil war with the Turkish military since 1984, came to a conclusion following the February 1999 arrest and subsequent trial of Abdullah Öcalan, the founder and head of the PKK. Then, in August 1999 a massive 7.5-scale earthquake hit near the industrial city of İzmit, which is an hour or so outside of Istanbul. The earthquake is estimated to have killed about 35,000 people, and destroyed hundreds of thousands of shoddily constructed buildings and infrastructure. Beyond the physical devastation of the earthquake, however, it had important political consequences. In

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<sup>370</sup> The period of my analysis ends in 2008, which is why this phase's end-date is designated as 2008. That said, I do not think that a new phase has been entered in the past three years.

particular, the earthquake damaged the legitimacy of Turkish politicians and the state itself, both because the state's response to the disaster was slow and disorganized, and because government officials had allowed contractors to erect so many buildings that did not meet safety codes. Moreover, Öktem writes that the immediate offers of aid and help from so many countries revealed to Turks that "the world was not their enemy" (2011: 114). A little over a year later, two financial crises occurred in quick succession – in November 2000 and February 2001 – crippling the Turkish economy, forcing Turkey to secure two major loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and leading to the implementation of a broad swath of reforms over the following two years. Importantly, these structural reforms – which involved liberalizing, privatizing and regulating different parts of the economy – have been credited with putting Turkey on a path of high economic growth in the past decade.

Then, in the November 2002 election, the Justice and Development Party won a majority of seats in the Turkish Parliament, and it has remained in power since. This was a watershed in Turkish politics. The AKP is a socially conservative party whose leadership comes from outside Turkey's traditional political and bureaucratic elite. Consequently, the AKP is not beholden to the traditional power bases in Turkey, especially the military, and is not as ideologically committed to Kemalism and its legitimating myths and narratives.<sup>371</sup> Moreover, as the mainstream inheritor of the Islamic political movement that has developed since the 1970s,<sup>372</sup> many of the leaders and some supporters of the party have suffered under Turkey's secular regime. Thus, as a result of the struggle of the party and its supporters to secure a place in Turkish politics (and civic life), the party has had clear motivations to challenge the status quo in Turkish politics.<sup>373</sup> In particular, AKP has had a strong interest in: expanding the scope of civil rights, especially religious expression; discrediting the military and secular establishment and constraining their ability to shut down the party;<sup>374</sup> and garnering votes from disaffected groups within Turkish society, such as Kurds and Alevis. Thus, between 2002 and 2005 (after which the pace of reform slowed significantly), the *AK Parti* passed a series of democratizing reforms and made a number of changes in aspects of Turkey's domestic politics and foreign policy orientation. (Since I discuss relevant reforms and policy changes in the sections below, I do not detail them here.)

Moreover, AKP has challenged entrenched sources of power and assumptions in Turkish politics, especially in the Ergenekon investigation and the 'democratic opening' initiative. Ergenekon is the name of an ultranationalist group that is accused of conspiring to create terror and chaos in Turkey in order to discredit AKP, derail Turkey's EU candidacy, and create the conditions for a military coup that would re-install secularists in power. Since mid-2007, there have been over one hundred arrests of individuals accused of being involved in this and the related Sledgehammer and Cage conspiracies, including retired military officers, police officers,

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<sup>371</sup> This is in contrast to the staunchly secular political parties, especially the Republican People's Party and the Nationalist Action/Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP).

<sup>372</sup> On this movement and AKP, see: Özbudun 2006.

<sup>373</sup> Göçek argues that "it was inevitable that JDP [i.e., AKP] rule would bring with it a challenge to the Republican principles of secularism and nationalism that had initially relegated them to minority status. What gave them identity was defined by what kept them apart: the emphasis on their public identity as Muslims" (2011: 6).

<sup>374</sup> Since the 1980 coup, Turkey's Constitutional Court issued rulings to close 18 political parties (Güney and Başkan 2008: 266). Among AK Party's predecessors in the Islamic political movement, most parties were closed by the Constitutional Court, including the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*) following the 1980 coup, the Welfare Party in 1998, and the Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*) in 2001 (*Ibid.*: 267-9).

journalists, lawyers and politicians. These investigations, in particular, have exposed how ‘deep state’ elements have influenced policies and public opinion on the Armenian question and many other sensitive domestic issues. For instance, the assassination of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink has been linked to the Ergenekon conspiracy, and some of the most prominent members of Ergenekon have actively incited nationalist sentiment on the Armenian question in the past several years. And while it appears that some of the charges in these investigations are only thinly substantiated and in some cases fabricated, which is deeply problematic for both the rule of law and further democratization, these investigations have exposed the military to significant criticism within Turkey, which has been long-overdue.

Aside from challenging the power of the military, AKP has also taken some steps toward dealing with the Kurdish question. Thus in 2005, Prime Minister Erdoğan visited Diyarbakır and admitted that Turkey had made a mistake in its dealing with Kurds, which was an important admission (Güzeldere 2009: 294). In 2007, AKP launched an initiative called the ‘Alevi opening,’ which aimed at addressing some of the problems faced by the Alevi religious minority group in Turkey, although this did not yield much substantive change (Meral 2010: 14). And finally, in mid-2009, the AKP announced a ‘democratic opening’ to comprehensively address the ‘Kurdish question’ and deepen Turkey’s democratization. Unfortunately, while this initiative was an historic step and a sign of the space that has opened up in Turkish politics, recent developments and crackdowns on Kurds have undercut this progress. On this, the researcher Ziya Meral writes that “the AKP’s silence over the closure of the Kurdish party DTP, arrests of hundreds of Kurdish local politicians, and harsh prison sentences given to juvenile Kurds who joined demonstrations has caused substantial damage to the party’s popularity among Kurds. These have overshadowed all of the steps the AKP has taken on the topic thus far” (2010: 14).

Finally, since 2005 in particular, although beginning a few years before, there has been a striking polarization within domestic politics, with the military and the secular parties (namely, the CHP and the Nationalist Action/Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP)) deploying increasingly vitriolic language and efforts in an attempt to discredit the AKP and mobilize popular and political support against AKP and the party’s feared Islamist agenda. This has included an attempted ‘e-coup’ in April 2007, massive pro-secularist rallies in major cities prior to the national election in July 2007,<sup>375</sup> and an attempt to close the AKP with a court case in 2008 that was narrowly decided in AKP’s favor by the Constitutional Court. Importantly, while this polarization was framed as a struggle between Islam and secularism, Meral points out that “the main tension ... was a power struggle between the old and new rulers” (2010: 23). This was accompanied by a rising tide of nationalism and ultranationalism in Turkey, which could be said to have culminated in the shocking assassination of Hrant Dink in January 2007. Following his assassination, there was a huge outpouring of public support for his family and friends, as well as for the Turkish-Armenian community, which has led to a number of new societal efforts to fight hate crime and challenge the official narrative. At the same time, however, the assassination did not signal an end to the ultranationalism and xenophobia among some portions of the Turkish political sphere.

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<sup>375</sup> Meral notes that “the organising civil society groups [behind these rallies] were all known to have direct links with the Armed Forces and nationalist movements” (2010: 23).

## The international context

As mentioned above, a crucial change in Turkey's external relations was its acceptance as a candidate for EU membership in December 1999, followed by the formal opening of accession negotiations in October 2005. Turkey's EU candidacy, combined with the AKP's early prioritization of progress toward EU membership, led to the passage of a number of reforms since 2001, especially in the areas of human and civil rights, and in the role of the Turkish military in civilian politics. The first major EU-inspired reforms passed by the Turkish Parliament occurred before the AKP came to power, most notably in August 2002. Since the AKP assumed power, however, it has passed a series of important reform packages to bring Turkish laws into line with the EU's *acquis communautaire*. While the majority of these reforms were passed in the party's first few years in power, the number and scope of reforms under AKP was much greater than under previous administrations and parties. As a result, the role of the military has been diminished,<sup>376</sup> minority rights have expanded, and human rights are better protected. All of these changes have extended the allowable space for debate and dissent on the Armenian question and on other controversial issues within Turkey's public sphere. That said, the implementation of these new laws has been more limited, and progress is still needed in the areas of freedom of expression and other rights and protections. Moreover, recent developments in Turkish politics show indications of some retraction in the openness of debate and in the scope for political dissention in Turkish politics.

On the issue of the Armenian question more specifically, EU institutions' and member-states' statements and actions have taken on much greater weight for Turkey, because they have the potential to affect Turkey's EU candidacy. Consequently, this has meant the introduction of new (or at least more influential) external actors into the politics surrounding the Armenian question. Among these actors, the most influential ones on this issue have been the EU Commission and the European Parliament. The EU Commission delegation's use of conditionality and setting of clear expectations for reforms have introduced new calculations and an important new actor and source of funding into the politics related to the Armenian question. In contrast to the conditionality used by the Commission, however, the European Parliament and some EU member-states initially claimed that Turkey's recognition of the genocide would be a pre-condition of membership in the EU. This was first declared in the European Parliament's June 1987 resolution, and was reaffirmed by the EP in 2000, 2004,<sup>377</sup> and in 2005.<sup>378</sup> However, the EP changed its position on this issue around 2006-07, and since then has called on Turkey to work with Armenia to establish good neighborly relations and to resolve the controversy over the 'tragic past.'<sup>379</sup> As a result, EU institutions now refrain from pressuring Turkey on the issue of the genocide, and the EU Commission supports civil society efforts to combat discrimination and improve dialogue within Turkish society.

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<sup>376</sup> To the dissatisfaction of the military, a range of reforms has been passed to reduce its influence in political affairs, especially with the dilution and diminution of its formal role in advising and supervising the executive (Sarigil 2007: 46; Salmoni 2003). In spite of these reforms, the military has, until recently, maintained a disproportionate role in Turkish politics (Salmoni 2003: 4-5). That said, the status and the legitimacy of the military have been diminished by the continuing revelations of the Ergenekon and related investigations.

<sup>377</sup> EP Resolution passed on 15 December 2004.

<sup>378</sup> EP Resolution P6\_TA(2005)0350, passed on 28 September 2005.

<sup>379</sup> This change is evidenced in resolutions passed on 24 October 2007 (EP resolution P6\_TA-PROV(2007)0472) and on 21 May 2008 (EP resolution P6\_TA(2008)0224).



Finally, over the past several years, Turkey has engaged in a gradual rapprochement with Armenia. “As early as 2002, Turkey eased visa restrictions on Armenians, and from 2005 onwards, Turkey opened its airspace for limited flights to Armenia” (Meral 2010: 40). In 2005, the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan issued an invitation to the Armenian President Kocharian to establish a “joint group consisting of historians and other experts ... to study the developments and events of 1915” (Erdoğan 2005). Then in 2007, the Turkish President Abdullah Gül extended the invitation to historians and experts from third party states, such as the United States and France. This meant that, in addition to scholars from Turkey and Armenia, Armenian scholars from the diaspora could also be included in the proposed commission. Moreover, beginning in 2008, Turkey and Armenia initiated a series of highly public and symbolic visits, accompanied by a series of deepening behind-the-scenes exchanges. And in October 2009, following a series of meetings and negotiations, and apparently with the support of the US and the EU, the foreign ministers of Turkey and Armenia signed protocols agreeing to move toward the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. One of the elements included in these protocols was a commitment to create a subcommittee to look into the ‘historical dimension,’ which is presumed to refer to the ‘events of 1915.’ Since shortly after the signing of the protocols, however, the normalization process has been at a standstill because of vociferous objections from Azerbaijan and from within Turkey.

The developing rapprochement can be understood in light of several factors. One is the AKP’s foreign policy approach of establishing a ‘zero-problem neighborhood,’ which has led AKP leaders and the policy’s architect, Ahmet Davutoğlu, who has been Turkey’s Foreign Minister for the past two years, to work to improve ties with each of Turkey’s neighbors. A second factor is that the developing relations with Armenia have been supported by US efforts in both countries. Third, these steps have gained Turkey some degree of respite from other states’ and international bodies’ pressure to recognize the Armenian genocide, since the improving relations with Armenia have been taken as positive steps, which states do not want to complicate or hinder. And fourth, Russia’s invasion of Georgia in the summer of 2008 signaled to Turkish officials (and others) the importance of not being overly dependent on Russia for energy resources, which increased the value of improving relations with Armenia, which could serve as an alternate transit country for oil and natural gas resources from the Caspian Sea (Babalı 2009).

Finally, over the past decade, Turkey and the US have remained close allies, although there have been some bumps in the relationship over this period. Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, US officials have strongly and repeatedly proclaimed Turkey’s symbolic importance as the only Muslim democracy in the Middle East, and as a Western-oriented partner that naturally bridges the gap between the West and the East, particularly the Middle East and Central Asia. Reflecting this, US officials have vocally supported Turkey’s EU membership candidacy, and Turkey was the first Muslim majority country that Barack Obama visited as President (in April 2009.) And yet, while the baseline relationship has been generally positive, Bush Administration officials were taken aback by the Turkish Parliament’s vote in 2003 to not allow the US to use Turkish bases in the invasion of Iraq, which led to strains in the relationship for several years after. In addition, while the Bush and Obama administrations have positively regarded AKP and the myriad democratic advancements under its rule, some analysts in Washington have recently wondered

whether Turkey's broadened foreign policy and its faltering public relationship with Israel might be signs of a more fundamental shift in the country's foreign policy orientation.<sup>380</sup>

### *Independent variables*

In addition to the structural changes discussed above, Turkey's narrative came under renewed and intensified pressure in this period, especially in the few years before and after the start of this phase. The most important of these pressures were: the deepening and broadening of domestic discussion about the Armenian question, and the increased rate of states' and other foreign bodies' recognition of the Armenian Genocide, especially from 1999.

#### Progressive domestic activism: Opening holes in the wall of silence<sup>381</sup>

Since the initial developments in the early 1990s, the growing domestic attention to the Armenian question has gradually lifted the taboo on its discussion, such that now activists, writers, intellectuals and journalists frequently discuss the issue, from a variety of perspectives. As a result, the official narrative is now challenged from *within* Turkish society, in addition to ongoing external challenges (described below.) One activist whom I interviewed emphasized the indirect but real influence that this societal activism and discourse has on this issue. While acknowledging that some activism or discussion – by more powerful elites – can directly affect the state's position on this issue, this activist argued that for the most part, the influence of activists is indirect, affecting the views and feelings of *people* within Turkish society.<sup>382</sup> Similarly, another civil society actor argued that the growing interest in Armenian-related issues, combined with the growing number of activists working on it; have opened the issue up for debate, offered a different version of events for Turks to consider, and thereby challenged the official narrative. As a result, the official narrative now has *domestic* opposition, to which officials must to some extent respond.<sup>383</sup>

Since Akçam's first publication in 1992, Belge has published fourteen books that relate to Armenians and/or the Armenian question/genocide, İletişim has published eleven books and Peri has published six books. In addition, Aras has continued to publish Turkish translations of Turkish-Armenian literature, publishing more than twenty such works in the past decade (Göçek 2011: 269-71). Moreover, several other publications have recently challenged the official narrative in subtle but powerful ways – documenting and narrating the presence and stories of Armenians and other minorities in Anatolia prior to (and in some cases, after) the genocide. Osman Köker's *Birzamanlar Yayıncılık* (Once Upon a Time Publishing) has published several books that document (with postcards and captions) the lives and presence of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire one hundred years ago (Köker 2005; Natanyan 2008). Building on his long-standing interest (since the early- mid-1990s) in human rights issues for minorities in Turkey, Köker started working on his first book in 2001. He wanted to do a project that would

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<sup>380</sup> This has been a key topic of debate in US policy circles over the past couple of years. I think the concern is misplaced. Others have similarly argued that such rhetoric is counterproductive and off-base (e.g., Walker 2010b).

<sup>381</sup> This phrase comes from an essay by Ragıp Zarakolu. Looking back at the past 15 years of activism and dialogue on the Armenian question, he concludes (in 2008) that: "Holes were opened in the wall of silence" (2008b: 30 – my translation).

<sup>382</sup> Author's interview with activist in Turkey [T-4], Istanbul, May 2008.

<sup>383</sup> Author's interview with intellectual in Turkey [T-12], Istanbul, May 2008.

communicate to all Turks, that would educate people about the situation in Anatolia *before* WWI, and that would allow people to think and draw conclusions themselves. In a different but equally humanizing work, the lawyer Fethiye Çetin published a memoir about her grandmother in 2004. Her grandmother was Armenian, but Çetin only learned this toward the end of her grandmother's life, when she finally shared with her granddaughter the truth about her long-hidden identity and the story of her experiences in 1915 and after. This book, *Anneannem* (My Grandmother), was a bestseller in Turkey and has been translated into English, German and Armenian since its initial publication. Moreover, since the publication of this first memoir by Çetin, a few other memoirs have been published in this same genre, about so-called 'secret/hidden Armenians' (*gizli Ermeniler*) (Altınay 2005). One civil society actor argued that, in the past 10 years, surprising progress has been made on the issue of the Armenian question, and that the best progress has come from the efforts of people like Fethiye Çetin and Osman Köker, whose work constitutes "a sincere, innocent discourse," thereby stimulating more progress than academic work and the publication of more history books.<sup>384</sup>

Civil society interest in and activism related to the Armenian question has also expanded significantly since the first attention to it emerged in the early 1990s. While the İHD commission's name was changed to The Committee Against Discrimination and Racism (*İrkçilik ve Ayrımcılığa Karşı Komisyonu*), it remained active until around 2002, after which its activities petered out. Recently, however, the committee has been revived by some of its former members.<sup>385</sup> In addition, each year since 2005, the Istanbul branch of İHD has organized a press conference and/or issued a press release on April 24<sup>th</sup>, publicly marking and commemorating the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.<sup>386</sup> Furthermore, in 2006, the Istanbul branch of İHD also called on the Turkish Ministry of the Interior (*İçişleri Bakanlığı*) to investigate a mass grave that was discovered in Mardin, near villages from which Armenians and Assyrians had been taken away and presumably killed in WWI. Moreover, other non-governmental, human rights organizations in Turkey have also begun to work minority rights and issues related to Armenians, most notably the Turkish branch of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (*Helsinki Yurttaşlar Derneği*, hYd),<sup>387</sup> and the Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People (*İnsan Hakları ve Mazlumlar için Dayanışma Derneği*, MAZLUMDER). More recently, the International Hrant Dink Foundation (*Uluslararası Hrant Dink Vakfı*) was formed a year after Hrant Dink's assassination in January 2007 by members of his family and a number of other activists, academics, journalists and others. The foundation is dedicated to preserving Dink's legacy by undertaking activities and projects that are continuations of the issues that he worked on and advocated for during his life.<sup>388</sup> Among a range of current projects, one is a

<sup>384</sup> Author's interview with civil society actor [T-25], Istanbul, May 2008.

<sup>385</sup> Its members decided to change the name because they did not like the negative connotations of the word 'minority' (*azınlık*) in Turkey. The committee's activities have been revived in response to Hrant Dink's assassination in January 2007. Author's interview with activist in Turkey [T-4], Istanbul, May 2008.

<sup>386</sup> See: Zarakolu 2008b: 28; Keskin 2011. For the text of İHD-İstanbul Şubesi's 2005 press release, see: Zarakolu 2008: 207-9.

<sup>387</sup> Zarakolu (2008b: 23) writes that hYd worked on this issue from the perspective of helping to develop Armenian-Turkish dialogue in the 1990s, and that in 2003 the organization developed a summer school for Turkish and Armenian youths. In addition, the prominent leftist academic and public intellectual Mete Tunçay (2008: 241) notes that the Turkey branch of hYd, together with the Yerevan branch, organized a meeting titled "Civil Approaches to Turkish-Armenian Dialogue" in June 2002.

<sup>388</sup> One of the Foundation's main goals is to help make Turkey a place where people can speak about things by helping to develop dialogue, peace and an empathetic culture. See the discussion of the foundation's goals on its

systematic study of hate speech in the Turkish media, which focuses particular attention on hate speech about minorities and other controversial topics,<sup>389</sup> while another is an oral history project focused on Armenians in Turkey.<sup>390</sup> And in just the past couple of years, a number of new civil society and human rights organizations have been established and have begun to work on the Armenian question (among a range of other issues.)<sup>391</sup> Finally, as Turkish civil society has grown over the past fifteen years, a number of civil society groups have focused on freedom of expression, which includes speech about Armenians and the Armenian question.<sup>392</sup>

Moreover, civil society interest in this issue has broadened beyond the small group of leftist, human rights activists to include businessmen, journalists and many others. One of the most prominent organizations involved in this issue is the Turkish-Armenian Business Development Council (TABDC). It was formed in 1997 by two businessmen with business interests in Turkey and Armenia, one of whom is Turkish and the other of whom is Armenian.<sup>393</sup> Over the past ten or so years, TABDC has organized a number of activities to build professional and business networks between Turkey and Armenia, and to increase mutual understanding between Turks and Armenians, including: organizing visits of businessmen from Armenia to Turkey and vice versa, organizing musicians' exchanges between Turkey and Armenia, organizing exchanges between universities in Turkey and in Armenia, and proposing ideas to policymakers. Notably, while TABDC's members are all non-governmental actors, the idea to form the TABDC was originally suggested by Armenian government officials, who thought that in the absence of diplomatic relations, a Turkish-Armenian business group could provide a forum of contact and exchange between the two countries, and could help overcome the lack of trust between Turks and Armenians. While the businessmen who are involved in TABDC stand to benefit financially if relations between Turkey and Armenia are normalized and the border is reopened, the organization has played a role in diplomatic developments and in other exchanges between Turkey and Armenia over the past ten-plus years.<sup>394</sup>

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website: <http://www.hrantdink.org/?About=19>, accessed on 26 May 2011. Some of the main issues on which the Foundation focuses are: needy children, Turkish-Armenian relations, creating a common Anatolian history, archiving the writing of Hrant Dink, and creating a museum/house of conscience for holding exhibits and events (Author's interview with intellectual in Turkey [T-32], Istanbul, May 2008).

<sup>389</sup> This study is funded by the EU Commission delegation, among other sources. Author's interview with civil society actor [T-13], Istanbul, March 2009.

<sup>390</sup> The Foundation also offers a research grant for studies on "scrupulous and humanitarian acts during the 1915 events, with the aim to search and find people who with a clear conscience serve as an example for mankind, and consequently to share the disclosed information with the society, while revealing an unspoken aspect of history." On this, see: <http://www.hrantdink.org/?Detail=7>, accessed on 24 June 2011.

<sup>391</sup> These new organizations include: the Organization to Research and Confront Societal Events (*Toplumsal Olayları Araştırma ve Yüzleşme Derneği*, which is known as *Yüzleşme Derneği*), the Young Civilians (*Genç Siviller*), Say Stop to Racism and Nationalism! (*İrkçılığa ve Milliyetçiliğe Dur De!*, which is known as *DurDe!* for short), and For Hrant, For Justice (*Hrant İçin, Adalet İçin*).

<sup>392</sup> These groups include: the Committee for Publishing Freedom of the Turkish Publisher's Association (*Türkiye Yayıncılar Birliği Yayınlama Özgürlüğü Komitesi*), the Freedom of Expression gatherings and the Civil Disobedience Campaigns that have been organized by the activist Şanar Yurdatapan since 1997 and 1995 (respectively), and the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (*Türkiye İnsan Hakları Vakfı*, TİHV.) Author's interview with civil society actor [T-15], Istanbul, May 2008.

<sup>393</sup> The two co-chairmen of the TABDC are Kaan Soyak and Arsen Ghazarian. The former is Turkish and the latter is Armenian.

<sup>394</sup> See the materials and information available on TABDC's website: <http://www.tabdc.org/>, accessed on 26 May 2011. Interestingly, TABDC has never been an official organization in Turkey, because they have been unsuccessful

Also within the past ten to fifteen years, there have been significant developments within the realm of academia. Over this period, a small group of academics in Turkey, most of whom work at one of several private universities in Istanbul, have started to work on issues related to the Armenian question. Led by the pioneering work of the Turkish historian Taner Akçam, this new group of scholarship began emerging in the early to mid-1990s (as described in the previous phase, above.) With time, it has developed into a growing body of critical, Turkish scholarship on various aspects of the Armenian question, which the sociologist Fatma Müge Göçek (2006) has argued constitutes a ‘postnationalist critical narrative.’ Related to and part of this burgeoning of critical scholarship, in 2000 the Workshop for Armenian / Turkish Scholarship (WATS) was established by three academics at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor: the sociologist Fatma Müge Göçek, and the historians Ronald Grigor Suny and Gerard J. Libaridian.<sup>395</sup> This workshop is an effort to build academic dialogue and improve scholarship on the issue of the Armenian Genocide/massacres<sup>396</sup> during WWI, and it has involved a series of academic conferences (in 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2008 and 2010) that have taken place at a variety of (mostly American) universities over the past eleven years, and a (recently-defunct) email listserve for discussion and debate.<sup>397</sup> Aside from its academic purpose, the workshops and email list have been crucial in building a network of scholars and others interested in and working on the ‘Armenian question,’ and some members of the email list (along with the list itself) have been involved in some of the political developments over the past five to ten years.

In a related effort in 2005, a number of Turkish academics, many of whom had participated in the first few WATS conferences, organized a conference on Ottoman Armenians during the period of the decline of the Ottoman Empire. In spite of the seemingly limited scope of the conference theme, however, papers presented at the conference ranged from the Hamidian period up to the Republican era, and many touched and/or focused on issues related to the genocide. This conference was a monumental step, signaling the increased number and confidence of Turkish scholars working on this issue. Moreover, it posed a fundamental challenge to the official claim that the ‘Armenian question’ should be left to historians. On one hand, it was exactly what Turkish officials had long been calling for, qualified historians to look into the issues; while on the other hand it was exactly what Turkish officials had long sought to avoid, Turkish historians looking into the issues and challenging the official narrative on that basis.<sup>398</sup> As a result, while the conference was originally supposed to take place in May 2005, it was postponed and its location was moved because of threats and a court order against the conference being held at its originally planned locations. Among the threats directed at the conference organizers, the most notable was that of the Minister of Justice Cemil Çiçek, who accused the conference participants of “stabbing the nation in the back” (Toumani 2008).<sup>399</sup> Nevertheless, while the conference organizers faced serious threats from ultranationalists in Turkey and from

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in getting their applications for a license approved by the Ministry of the Interior. Sources on TABDC: Author’s interview with Turkish businessman [T-26], Ankara, March 2009; Author’s interview with Turkish businessman [T-3], Ankara, March 2009; Author’s interview [T-14], Ankara, March 2009.

<sup>395</sup> For a summary of the goals and development of WATS, see: Göçek 2008; Suny and Göçek 2011.

<sup>396</sup> Different terminology is employed by various members of the workshop, and the use of the term genocide is not a condition of participation in the workshop.

<sup>397</sup> I was a member of the WATS email listserve from mid-2006 until its end in early 2011.

<sup>398</sup> I thank Peggy Anderson for encouraging me to think about the importance of the conference in these terms.

<sup>399</sup> For more on Çiçek’s comments, see: Arslan 2006: 32-3.

some government officials, it was rescheduled and held without mishap at Istanbul Bilgi University in September 2005.

Other academic efforts have begun in recent years, such as the Hrant Dink memorial workshops that have been organized by academics at Sabancı University for the past couple of years,<sup>400</sup> and an oral history project related to the experiences of Turkish-Armenians organized by Leyla Neyzi at Sabancı University.<sup>401</sup> Finally, the progressive think tank, Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (*Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı*, TESEV), has organized several social science research projects (mostly through its democratization program) that include discussion of the situation of minorities in Turkey, along with reports on the Armenian question and Turkish-Armenian relations.<sup>402</sup>

Lastly, an ‘Apology Campaign’ was launched in December 2008 by a group of four Turkish intellectuals – Baskın Oran, Cengiz Aktar, Ali Bayramoğlu, and Ahmet İnsel – and 200 initial supporters. This ‘apology campaign,’ which should be understood in part as a response to Hrant Dink’s assassination, consisted of a website that had a simple message of apology directed at Armenians, to which individuals could add their names. The English text of the apology read: “My conscience does not accept the insensitivity showed to and the denial of the Great Catastrophe that the Ottoman Armenians were subjected to in 1915. I reject this injustice and for my share, I empathize with the feelings and pain of my Armenian brothers and sisters. I apologize to them.”<sup>403</sup> Following the website’s launching in December 2008, it gathered over 30,000 signatures within a very short time, and it generated a tremendous amount of discussion and debate in Turkey, as well as responses from diaspora Armenian organizations and others. While the fact of this apology is, in and of itself, quite significant, the campaign also revealed stark differences of opinion within Turkish society and among Turkish activists. On one hand, there were reports that some activists had pushed to include the word ‘genocide’ in the apology, while on the other hand, the campaign elicited a much larger counter-reaction from Turkish nationalists and diplomats.

#### Political challenges within the domestic sphere

In addition to this burgeoning societal activism, in this phase Kurdish politicians also *publicly* called for the government to recognize and apologize for the genocide. Thus, while the secularist and nationalist parties (read: the CHP and the MHP) have continued to strongly support the official narrative, explicit challenges to the official narrative have been voiced by politicians from the ethnically-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*, DTP). Hence, in December 2008, members of the DTP parliamentary delegation called on the Turkish Parliament to apologize to Armenians for the ‘events of 1915’ and used the Kurdish word for genocide (*Asbarez News* 2008). And in October 2009, the deputy chairman of the DTP’s parliamentary group called for the Turkish government to question and change its official policy about this past, declaring: “During the last period of the Ottoman Empire, in 1915-16, the Union

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<sup>400</sup> Author’s interview with Turkish academic [T-17], Istanbul, March 2009.

<sup>401</sup> One result of this project is a recently published book with a selection of oral histories of Turks and Armenians (Neyzi and Kharatyan-Araqelyan 2010).

<sup>402</sup> See, e.g.: Görgülü 2008; Görgülü et al. 2009; Kurban and Hatemi 2009; Kurban 2007; Oran 2004.

<sup>403</sup> The website is: <http://www.ozurdiliyoruz.com/>, accessed on 24 June 2011.

and Progress Party systematically pursued a policy of extermination of the Christians who had been the native peoples of the country for centuries” (Gunaysu 2009c). These statements offer evidence of the lifting of the taboo on this issue within Turkey. Moreover, they also highlight how the prior *political* consensus on the Armenian question is loosening (somewhat) within Turkey’s political sphere, as some Kurdish politicians have openly challenged the official narrative, and AKP leaders have taken steps that could lead to changes in the content of the narrative.

### Counter-currents in the domestic sphere

At the same time, while this issue has been more widely discussed and critically studied in Turkey in the past ten years, these progressive critiques described above have not been advanced within a vacuum. Thus, as a few Turkish scholars like Akçam and the historian Halil Berktaş publicly called the events a genocide, and as critical attention to the issue expanded; a range of retired Turkish diplomats, journalists and organizations have engaged with these critiques, advancing different arguments, some of which directly support the official narrative and others of which articulate varying middle-ground positions. Interestingly, Necef argues that domestic discussion of the issue most dramatically expanded in the context of the US Congress’ fall 2000 consideration of a resolution to recognize the genocide (2003: 229). Moreover, he emphasizes that among the different positions taken by intellectuals, journalists and others in the domestic debate that emerged, those who (like Akçam) called the events of 1915 “genocide” were the smallest group (Necef 2003: 230). In addition to this tiny ““genocide recognisers”” group, Necef identifies three other ‘groups’ who were active in the domestic debate. He labels these others as: “the ‘mutual killings’ group,” the “‘we are the real victims’-group,” and the “fourth group ... unabashedly defends the deportation and the massacres as a necessary measure which Turks should not feel any remorse over” (*Ibid.*). Finally, among these four groups, Necef further notes that the “‘we are the real victims’-group” was the largest (*Ibid.*), and that the debate conducted among this group and the more extreme nationalists (in the fourth group) was “much more vigorous” than the debate among the first two groups of intellectuals (2003: 234). In particular, Necef describes how one of the most widely-read newspaper columnists in Turkey argued that those Turks who accepted “the genocide claims of the Armenians” were “‘internal enemies”” (2003: 236).

In addition, over the past several years, nationalism and a more extreme form of ultra-nationalism gained traction and a broad audience in Turkey. Over this period, the Armenian question was used as an issue (among others) around which to rally support for nationalist groups and causes. Unfortunately, this was more than merely a rhetorical tool or a wedge issue, and led to serious violence and threats of violence against Christians, Armenians and Turks who challenge the official narrative of the Armenian question, including: the murder of three Christians at a Bible publishing company in Malatya in 2007, the assassination of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink in January 2007, and the issuance of death threats against and the intimidation of the historian Taner Akçam<sup>404</sup> and other prominent journalists, academics and writers who have challenged the official narrative on this issue. As a result of this nationalism and the appropriation of this issue for ultra-nationalist mobilization, debate within Turkey on this issue has been to some extent dampened, people’s curiosity to learn more about the Armenian

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<sup>404</sup> See Akçam’s article (2007a) describing these threats.

question and Armenians in Turkey and in the Ottoman Empire has been quenched,<sup>405</sup> and the Turkish government's ability to shift its position on this issue has been constrained.

Finally, it is important to note that this ultra-/nationalism has been partially in response to, and in turn has had an impact on, the critical developments described above.

### Increasing international recognition of the genocide

In addition to this expanding Turkish discourse on the topic, the past ten to fifteen years has seen a dramatic increase in international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. In particular, a number of legislative resolutions were passed in different states in 2000 and 2001.<sup>406</sup> While these resolutions resulted in part from the efforts of organizations within the Armenian diaspora, the bunching of resolutions around this time has also been attributed to the Armenian government's changed policy on this issue, which occurred after Robert Kocharian became President in 1998 (Bloxham 2005: 223). Beyond these two factors, a recent report by the European Stability Initiative (a European think tank with strong connections in Turkey) argues that "many of these resolutions [i.e., those of the past decade] cannot be explained by Armenian lobbying, or indeed by any apparent anti-Turkish sentiment. Genocide resolutions have passed in countries with small Armenian populations" and even in those with large Turkish populations (2009: 19).

Of the resolutions related to the Armenian Genocide that were considered and/or passed around this time, two particularly provoked the Turkish government: the consideration of a resolution (HRes 596) recognizing the Armenian Genocide in the US House of Representatives in the fall of 2000; and the French National Assembly's and Senate's passage of bills recognizing the Armenian Genocide in January and November 2000 (respectively), which finally became French law in January 2001. Also, in 2006 the French Parliament considered a bill that would have criminalized denial of the Armenian Genocide. While this bill did not become law,<sup>407</sup> it elicited a very strong reaction in Turkey, including cries of hypocrisy due to this law's proposed restriction on freedom of speech. This proposed bill was particularly ironic, given that the EU was at the same time pushing Turkey to remove from its penal code an article (301) that broadly limited freedom of speech by prohibiting 'insulting Turkishness' (*Türklüğü aşağılama*).<sup>408</sup>

### Other international developments

In 2001, a 'Track Two' diplomatic initiative was established, called the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC). Track Two diplomacy typically refers to diplomatic efforts

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<sup>405</sup> Reflecting this shift, for example, is the fact that in 2000, Belge Yayınları decreased the size of initial printings of books on the Armenian question, because of rising nationalism. Moreover, by the late 2000s their books on the Armenian question were available in many fewer bookstores compared with the 1990s.

<sup>406</sup> Related to this trend toward international recognition of the Armenian Genocide, since 2000, a number of major newspapers in the US have declared that their official policies are to refer to this event as an unqualified genocide. The newspapers that have taken this decision include the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times (in 2004) and the Boston Globe (in 2003). Also in 2003, the *New Yorker* made a similar editorial decision (Bobelian 2009: 290, note 8). In Canada, the Montreal Gazette established a similar policy in 2005 (Sassounian 2005).

<sup>407</sup> It was only passed in the National Assembly, but not in the French Senate.

<sup>408</sup> In response to pressure from the EU, the law was slightly revised in 2007, although it remains somewhat problematic.



that only involve non-state, civil society actors, but in this case the commission was suggested and funded by the US State Department, and most of the members of the Turkish delegation had connections to the Turkish state, rendering it a ‘civil society’ effort in name more than substance. The Turkish delegation consisted of four prominent Turkish individuals, three of whom were retired high-level government officials, and the Armenian delegation included representatives from the Armenian diaspora and from the Republic of Armenia. TARC lasted for two years, disbanding in 2003, and is generally considered to have been a failure in meeting its stated goals.<sup>409</sup>

### *The dependent variable*

In 1998 and 1999, as pressures mounted on the official narrative, Turkish officials and politicians made statements expressing the need for a more coherent ‘retaliation plan’ to effectively respond to these challenges. Thus, in June 1998, the leader of the CHP, Deniz Baykal, declared in a speech to CHP parliamentarians:

“‘If the French Senate approves the bill, other countries’ parliaments will inevitably follow suit and the issue may even be put on the United Nations’ agenda,’ ... [He] warn[ed] that if the matter is internationalized, Armenian demands for restitution and repatriation may be raised as a result. The CHP leader also argued that a multitude of historians had refuted the claims of Armenian genocide in their research and had proved Turkey’s position right. ‘But in the prevailing circumstances, being right is not enough. We should initiate comprehensive activities to make the world accept that we are right,’ he underlined” (*Turkish Daily News* 1998b).

In early 2001, concrete action was finally taken, prompted by the conjuncture of two events that particularly galled Turkish officials: the French Parliament’s passage of a law recognizing the Armenian Genocide in January 2001,<sup>410</sup> and the US Congress’ consideration of a resolution that would have recognized the genocide in the fall of 2000.

In this phase, the trajectory of the official narrative has been characterized both by continuities and by shifts in emphasis and argumentation. And similar to the changes in Phase Two, international pressure again triggered *ambivalent* responses in the Turkish narrative, with moves toward greater acknowledgement coming alongside greater defensiveness and mythmaking. Moreover, in this phase bureaucratic and military elites continued to serve as strong sources of continuity and of resistance to pressures for change in the official narrative. Importantly, this phase highlights several points.

*First*, the AKP’s assumption of and continuing hold on power increased the likelihood of change in the official narrative, as the power of the elites most invested in its continuation was gradually undercut. Reflecting this increased potential for change, the AKP has shown willingness to

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<sup>409</sup> For one perspective on TARC, written by the American who headed it, see: Phillips 2005.

<sup>410</sup> Diplomatically, Turkey responded to the January 2001 passage of a law recognizing the Armenian Genocide by the French Parliament with a range of retaliatory measures, which included the cancellation of military contracts and military contact for a period of time, as well as the cancellation or suspension of numerous other aspects of political, economic and social relations between the two states (Bloxham 2005: 224; Bayraktar 2005: 4).

consider a different approach to the Armenian question and has taken steps in the direction of change. For example, in 2005, the then-Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül offered behind-the-scenes encouragement to the organizers of the first scholarly conference in Turkey that critically investigated Ottoman Armenians' experiences before, during and after WWI,<sup>411</sup> and sent a statement of support to be read at the opening of the conference. Then in 2006, Prime Minister Erdoğan announced that the phrase 'so-called Armenian genocide' (*sözde Ermeni soykırımı*) should not be used by government officials, who were instead instructed to use the more neutral phrase 'the events of 1915' (*1915 olayları*).<sup>412</sup> While this decision has not always been followed in practice, the decision indicates AKP's more rational approach to this issue. Moreover, under the AKP, Turkey has invited Armenia to establish a joint historians' commission to look into these events, has restored an ancient Armenian cathedral in eastern Turkey, and has taken steps toward the normalization of relations with Armenia.

Still, in most cases the steps taken by the AKP have been ambiguous, and despite these positive indications, the content of the narrative has not changed as much as signals might indicate would have been the case. Thus, while AKP's outsider status has meant that its leaders do not have the same extent of legitimacy concerns vis-à-vis the official narrative as the military and the secularist CHP and MHP have had, it is a large party that encompasses politicians with different views on the Armenian question, as evidenced by the Justice Minister Cemil Çiçek's condemnation of the organizers of the 2005 conference on Ottoman Armenians. Perhaps more importantly, despite these indications of AKP leaders' less dogmatic attitude on this issue; bureaucrats, the military, historians in the Turkish Historical Society, retired diplomats and Kemalist elites (especially in the opposition CHP) have significantly constrained the extent of change over the course of this phase.<sup>413</sup> They have done so both through their holds on the institutional mechanisms through which the narrative is reproduced, and through their rhetorical (and other) interventions in the public sphere, which have rallied nationalist fears of change on this issue and have served as warnings to the AKP (and others) of the potential risks of more dramatic change. Thus, reflecting the continued influence of these traditional elites, the strategies undertaken by Turkish officials and bureaucrats in this phase have largely followed the set of strategies established in the early 1980s.

*Second*, and related to the last point, the strong continuities in the official narrative illustrate the power of feedback effects to constrain and limit change, in this case in the continued commitment and involvement of bureaucratic actors in reproducing the official narrative, the

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<sup>411</sup> Author's interview with Turkish intellectual [US-3], Boston area, February 2010; Author's interview with Turkish academic [T-43], Istanbul, July 2007.

<sup>412</sup> This decision was made by the Committee to Coordinate the Struggle with the Baseless Genocide Claims (*Asılsız Soykırım İddiaları ile Mücadele Koordinasyon Kurulu*, ASİMKK) (see below) when one of its co-heads was Abdullah Gül, who was then the Foreign Minister (Author's interview with academic [T-18], Ankara, March 2009).

<sup>413</sup> For example, Zarakolu points out that in the couple of recent instances when foreign researchers have reached out to the Turkish Historical Society to conduct "joint research" on the Armenian question, the efforts have completely failed (2008b: 25), due in particular to the strident claims and grandstanding tactics of the TTK's then-head, Yusuf Halaçoğlu. Moreover, writing about the restoration of the Church of the Holy Cross on Akhtamar Island, Kouymjian writes that in late 2002, "Huseyin Celik, the Minister of Culture and a member of the ruling Islamicist party of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. ... [said:] 'What we are up against is an undeclared policy by certain narrow-minded individuals, within the state, of discrimination against Armenian monuments in Turkey.' He continued, 'The fear of these policymakers is that if Christian sites are restored, this will prove that Armenians once lived here and revive Armenian claims on our land'" (Kouymjian 2010: 7, quoting from Zaman 2002).

replication of official strategies, and reiterations of the official narrative by retired diplomats and ‘societal’ actors who were mobilized to work on this issue in earlier phases.

And *third*, the changes in this phase illustrate that the official narrative is vulnerable to challenges and pressures from societal actors within Turkey. In particular, given that evidence about the genocide is increasingly available within Turkey, shifts in the content of the narrative in this phase in part reflect official efforts to maintain a plausible and legitimate official narrative for *domestic* audiences. Necef (2003: 228) argues that “the globalisation of the Armenian question forced Turkish intellectuals to rethink the issue and present more reasoned views which can be taken seriously by foreign scholars or politicians.” I would argue that this concern to produce a narrative that could be taken seriously equally applies to the considerations of Turkish officials vis-à-vis domestic audiences in this phase.

### The content of the narrative

Rhetorically, there were several notable changes in the official narrative in this phase, along with a number of continuities.

Several trends have made it much more difficult for the Turkish state to deny the basic facts that Armenians were deported by the Ottoman government, that this deportation was poorly managed, and that many Armenians suffered and died as a result of the deportation. These factors are: first, the increasing number of states and international organizations that have recognized the Armenian Genocide; second, the increase in academic work that has been published on this topic, abroad as well as in Turkey; and third, democratizing reforms prompted by Turkey’s EU candidacy and changes in other tabooed domestic issues, especially the Kurdish question.<sup>414</sup> Consequently, these facts are now acknowledged in the official narrative, but are also more strongly rationalized and relativized. In particular, given the increasing evidence available within the domestic sphere in Turkey that hundreds of thousands of Ottoman Armenians died in the genocide, the official narrative has shifted to acknowledge a higher death toll than it previously did. At the same time, greater effort is also dedicated to rationalizing this high death toll, and new arguments have been advanced for why the deportation of Ottoman Armenians does not fit the definition of genocide.<sup>415</sup>

While the overarching argument that this was not a genocide continued, the arguments offered for why the events should not be called a genocide shifted in this phase. *First*, the argument that Armenians died in the context of a civil war was *not* a central feature in official statements in Phase Four. Instead, the narrative continued to highlight the massacres, uprisings and rebellion of Armenians.<sup>416</sup> Thus in 2005, Yusuf Sarıay, the head of the Prime Minister’s State Archives (*Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü*), announced that 523,955 Turks had been massacred by Armenians in Anatolia during the period from 1910 through 1922. Sarıay further emphasized that the history of the Armenian question did not start in 1915, and that the events

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<sup>414</sup> Necef (2003: 224) also makes this last point.

<sup>415</sup> Interestingly, however, textbooks in this phase continued to omit Armenian deaths and suffering in the deportation.

<sup>416</sup> This was less central in communications to *international* audiences than in the previous phase, given the shift in the narrative to the language of reconciliation and dialogue.

leading to the Turkish government's decision started in 1878. Moreover, he argued that because Armenians wanted to establish a state of their own, in certain areas in Anatolia they committed systematic massacres of Turkish Muslims (*Akşam* 2005).<sup>417</sup> Similarly, in textbooks in this phase,<sup>418</sup> Armenians' murder of Turks was mentioned more frequently (albeit in less graphic terms than in the prior phase), and Armenians' plans to rise up against the Ottoman Government were chronicled in greater detail. This created a stronger overall impression of Armenians' disloyalty, without the textbooks using such strong language.<sup>419</sup> Furthermore, the 2005 textbook went even further, declaring that: "The Turkish Government is held to be responsible for these events, and there is talk of a so-called Armenian genocide. It should not be forgotten that a genocide was committed by the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia. Mass graves and discoveries, which are emerging with research and investigations that are being conducted today, document the massacres that Armenians carried out" (Akdin et al. 2005: 106). This assertion of a genocide committed by Armenians is a striking claim that was not present in earlier textbooks, and only began to appear in the late 1990s.

*Second*, in this phase Turkish officials began to assert that Turkey did not have any 'dark pages' or genocide in its past. For example, in May 2005 to an audience of *AK Parti* politicians, Prime Minister Erdoğan declared: "During its history, Turkey has never degraded itself to the vile cruelty of committing genocide. It's out of the question for us to accept this" (*Turkish Weekly* 2005). And in an interview with British journalists in 2007, Erdoğan asserted: "Our history is not the history of genocides. Our religion would never allow this" (*The Times* 2007).

And *third*, since about 2006, Turkish officials have repeatedly stated that these "allegations of genocide" have never been "legally or historically substantiated."<sup>420</sup> In her research on the Turkish state's policies on the Kurdish question, Bilgin Ayata refers to the state's "regulatory approach" in recent years, by which the state appears to seriously tackle long-standing claims and grievances, but in which the steps taken are primarily superficial and rhetorical.<sup>421</sup> This "regulatory approach" could be equally applied to some of the most notable changes in the content of the narrative in this phase, including this claim that the genocide has not been "substantiated." For example, in a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* in 2006, Ambassador Şensoy wrote: "It is our position that unlike the Holocaust, the Armenian allegations of genocide have never been historically or legally substantiated . . . . Genocide is a crime defined by international law. As such, it must be proved beyond a reasonable doubt, not

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<sup>417</sup> The Turkish read: "*belirli bölgelerde sistematik katliam yapmışlar.*"

<sup>418</sup> In this phase I analyzed two textbooks, which were published in 2005 and 2007. Since I have only been able to analyze these two textbooks, my discussion of the content of textbooks in this phase is somewhat preliminary.

<sup>419</sup> This less graphic language reflects a 2005 decision of the National Security Council to use more moderate language when referring to neighboring countries and to avoid expressions that would instigate animosity between peoples, which was then applied to the language used in textbooks (*Taraf* 2009).

<sup>420</sup> In conjunction with the argument that the claims of genocide have not been legally or historically substantiated, the official narrative at times briefly referred to the Holocaust in this phase. In contrast to references to the Holocaust in Phase Two, however, the point of comparison in Phase Four was that whereas the Holocaust has been legally and historically proven and substantiated, the "Armenian claims/allegations" have not. This comparison is illustrated in the statement by Ambassador Şensoy (above.)

<sup>421</sup> See, e.g., Ayata 2009, where she contends that, "In recent years, the Turkish government has proved very adept in shifting its policy of denial to a policy of regulation in response to international and domestic challenges, thus enabling it to circumvent the issues at hand by introducing half-hearted formulas to ward off further pressure and demands."

by, as you suggest, a ‘preponderance of serious scholarship’” (Sensoy 2006). Likewise, in an op-ed article in *The Washington Times* in March 2007, then-Foreign Minister Gül wrote: “With regard to the Armenian allegation describing the tragedy that befell them as genocide, the question, from the point of view of international law, is whether the Ottoman government systematically pursued a calculated act of state policy for their destruction in whole or in part. The answer to this question can only be established by scholars who have the ability to evaluate the period objectively, working with the full range of available primary sources” (Gul 2007). This new theme was also evident in textbooks, which actually introduced the concept of genocide, referring to the passage of the United Nations (UN) Genocide Convention in 1948 and outlining its definition of genocide (Kara 2007: 57; Akdin et al. 2005: 39). Then, these textbooks asserted that Greek claims of a genocide committed by Turks against Pontic Greeks are, in the words of one of the textbooks, “completely invalid and wrong” on definitional, historical and scientific grounds (Kara 2007: 57). These textbooks’ references to claims of genocide committed against Pontic Greeks and Assyrians were a new theme in textbooks, and one which first appeared in the official narrative late 1990s.

Another striking change in this phase is that, in communications to *international* audiences, Turkish officials appropriated the normative language of reconciliation and dialogue that has emerged in the past twenty years with the development of international norms of truth-telling and truth-seeking.<sup>422</sup> This normative language became the centerpiece of the official narrative in 2006. Since then, official statements have emphasized Turkey’s desire for ‘reconciliation,’ the need for ‘common/open dialogue,’ and the fact that Turkey is ready to face history/the past/the truth. What is fascinating is that, alongside such explicitly normative language, official statements also consistently imply or impute a *lack* of commitment to dialogue, truth and reconciliation on the part of the Republic of Armenia and/or Armenians in the diaspora. For example, in a letter to the editor of *The New York Times* in May 2006, Nabi Şensoy, the Turkish Ambassador to the US questioned why the Republic of Armenia had not accepted Turkey’s offer to establish a joint historical commission to study the events of 1915, asking: “If the evidence is really there, why not accept this offer?” He then concluded that “It is only through such a common dialogue that a process of reconciliation can begin. This may ultimately lead to closure for Armenians and Turks alike” (Sensoy 2006). Striking a similar note in an op-ed piece in March 2007, the then-Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül declared: “Turkey has no difficulties in facing its past. All Turkish archives, including the military archives of the period, are open to the entire international academic community. However, important Armenian archives are not.” Moreover, Gül concluded this piece with a similar call, writing: “We are determined to save future generations from the hegemony of bitter rhetoric and outright hostility. ... Self-examination is an inseparable part of any process of comprehension. In this regard, Turkey has been doing its share of soul-searching. It is high time for Armenians to do the same” (Gul 2007). Finally, in a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* the next month, Baki İlkin, Turkey’s Permanent Representative in the Turkish Mission to the UN asserted: “If the Armenian authorities are certain of their accusations, then they should be able to accept Turkey’s proposal to set up a joint historians’ commission, including those from third countries, to examine all the available documents and to reach a public decision on what really happened. Turkey has nothing to cover up. We are ready and willing to face the history. We expect the same from the Armenian side” (Ilkin 2007).

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<sup>422</sup> For more on these norms, see the discussion in Chapter 1.

Moreover, this language of reconciliation and dialogue has dovetailed with Turkey's invitation to Armenia to establish a joint historians' commission. This proposal built on the longstanding theme that this is an issue that should be addressed by historians, not by politicians, which continued to be an element of the official narrative in this phase. However, there was a slight shift in this point. Whereas in Phase Two and Phase Three the official narrative had pointed out that this was an issue that needed to be addressed by historians; in Phase Four the narrative stated that this was an issue that was 'still disputed' or 'not yet fully grasped' by historians, on which there was 'no consensus,' and on which a 'full review of all of the evidence was still needed.' This shift in the language subtly acknowledged the fact that many historians *have* looked into and grasped many of the historical details related to this issue. So instead of arguing that historians need to look into things, which many have already done, the narrative claims that *further* study of *all* of the relevant information is needed before accurate conclusions can be drawn. Thus, in an article published in August 2007, Turkish Ambassador Nabi Şensoy noted that "ADL [i.e., the Anti-Defamation League] and many prominent historians have agreed with us that the world has yet to see a full review of the historical record" (Sensoy 2007). Furthermore, over the past several years Turkey has repeatedly called on Armenia to accept its invitation to establish a joint historical commission, has hinted that Armenia's rejection of the proposal reflects the fact that Armenia is afraid of what the evidence might show, and has implied that Armenia and Armenians do not want reconciliation and dialogue.

The last new element of the official narrative in this phase was the claim that other countries' efforts to 'legislate history' would only do damage to Turkish-Armenian relations and to Turkey's evolving relations with that country, as well as to Turkey's relations with the legislating country (Akçam 2009). Thus, Turkish officials have explicitly attempted to tie together the issue of the Armenian Genocide and Turkish-Armenian relations. For example, in response to a European Parliament resolution about the genocide, "The office of President Ahmet Necdet Sezer warned that such moves [i.e., international attempts to raise the issue of genocide] would not help stability in the Caucasus and efforts to improve ties between Turkey and Armenia" (*Turkish Daily News* 2002a). And in May 2003, in a warning to Armenian diaspora groups, the Turkish "Minister of Education Huseyin Celik said, 'The Armenian societies in Europe and America should know that they are not doing good deeds for poor Armenia, struggling with a load of problems, instead they are giving harm'" (*Turkish Daily News* 2003). And in a March 2007 op-ed, Gül wrote:

"Today, as the United States and its allies confront critical challenges around the world, there is perhaps no nation more at the forefront of our collective efforts than Turkey. ... This relationship also has an important bearing on regional and global security. Yet, such strategic cooperation is jeopardized by a single interest group that solely pursues its own political agenda over national interests. Once again, Armenian lobbying organizations are determined to politicize the past – and impose their view of history – without any regard to the overriding and lasting interests of the United States or Armenia" (Gul 2007).

Finally, in addition to these changes, there were several continuities in the content of the narrative. Officials continued to emphasize that everyone had suffered during World War I, and that it was a time of mutual suffering. Statements continued to note that focusing on 'Armenian allegations' was only one side of the picture. In addition, statements at times noted that the

deportation was an action or decision that had to be taken in order to ensure the safety, security and/or survival of Turks and Muslims. Similarly, textbooks continued to mention the passage of the Deportation Law. Instead of asserting that Turkey was not responsible for the outcome of the deportation, however, textbooks rationalized the decision as a “precautionary measure” to “ensur[e] the security of the army and the state.”<sup>423</sup> Moreover, the issue of responsibility was rarely directly mentioned, although it was implicitly disavowed in many of the arguments described above. And finally, the theme of the unity of the nation was reinforced for domestic audiences in this phase. Fatma Ulgen emphasizes how, in response to the revelation that one of Atatürk’s adopted daughters might have been an Armenian survivor of the deportation, the Turkish media and Turkish officials rushed to rhetorically control this perceived threat to the unity of the nation and to the memory of Atatürk. Most notably, in response to this news the office of the Chief of General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces issued a long statement on 22 February 2004, part of which declared:

“Whatever the purpose is, throwing such a symbol into a debate is an approach that does not contribute to our national unity and social peace. ... Here the real important issue is what has been intended by this news. ... At a time that our national unity and togetherness must be the strongest, to what purpose such reports targeting our national unity and togetherness and national values serve has now been understood .... It is clear that defending the unity and togetherness of the Turkish nation ... is an obvious duty to be undertaken by every Turkish citizen and by all institutions besides the Turkish Armed Forces” (Ulgen 2010: 131-2).<sup>424</sup>

#### Strategies to defend the official narrative

Alongside shifts in the *content* of the narrative in this phase, the *strategies* used to defend the narrative exhibited remarkable continuity, as agents of the Turkish state<sup>425</sup> took steps quite similar to those taken in the 1980s to respond to and rebuff these new challenges to the official narrative.

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<sup>423</sup> For example, a 2005 textbook stated: “The Ottoman Government, in response to this behavior of the Armenians, passed the Deportation Law that made the Armenians undergo a forced migration as a precautionary measure. After the Armenian uprisings and massacres, this law, which had been passed with the goal of ensuring the security of the army and the state, came into effect on 14 May 1915” (Akden et al. 2005: 106). Interestingly, immediately after describing the Deportation Law, a 2007 textbook stated that the Ottoman Government also passed a Return Decree, which “arranged for Armenians’ return” (Kara 2007: 130). This ‘Return Decree’ was a window-dressing. In reality, as Armenians were being deported and killed, an agency within the Interior Ministry was tasked with collecting, storing and selling Armenians properties for the benefit of the state and CUP loyalists; and relocating Muslim refugees (largely from the Balkans) to villages and homes vacated by Armenians (Mann 2005: 157, 170). Moreover, those surviving Armenians who returned to their homes and villages after the genocide were largely unable to reclaim their homes and properties.

<sup>424</sup> The full text of this statement is translated in Ulgen’s dissertation (2010: 131-2). The original statement is available online at: <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=204466>, accessed on 14 June 2011.

<sup>425</sup> One interviewee noted that in this phase, the National Security Council is the main coordinating body for policies on the Armenian question (Author’s interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24b], Ankara, March 2009.)

## Centralizing control over the official narrative

In a step reminiscent of the 1981 creation of both the Information and Planning Coordination Committee and the dedicated unit within the MFA, in May 2001 the Committee to Coordinate the Struggle with the Baseless Genocide Claims (*Asılsız Soykırım İddiaları ile Mücadele Koordinasyon Kurulu*, ASİMKK) was established. Co-headed by the Foreign Minister and the general who heads the National Security Council, this loose inter-agency committee includes high-level representatives from key government ministries and organizations, including the Ministry of the Interior, the National Intelligence Organization, the Turkish Historical Society and the archives (*Zaman* 2002; Zarakolu 2008b: 16). While the committee's existence is not widely or openly discussed,<sup>426</sup> it appears that its main goals have been to coordinate and execute a centralized strategy for responding to international pressures on this issue, and to shape public opinion in Turkey and abroad on this issue. Its existence is not a completely hidden, however. In a daily press release from the Directorate General of Press and Information, the establishment of this committee on 25 May 2001 was announced, stating that its purpose was “to dismiss – without causing negative effects on [the] country – efforts concerning the unjust and baseless genocide claims to which Turkey was exposed, and to eliminate their negative effects on [Turkey's] national interest” (T.C. Başbakanlık Basın-Yayın ve Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü 2002).

In addition to this coordination at the governmental level, several think tanks and research groups that work at least in part on the Armenian question have been formed in the past several years, most with some government involvement. The most important of these is the Institute for Armenian Research (*Ermeni Araştırmaları Enstitüsü*, ERAREN), which is a think tank that focuses solely on the Armenian question and was formed in late 2000/early 2001, also in response to the law considered and passed in the French Parliament.<sup>427</sup> This think tank is headed by the retired diplomat and former head of İAGM, Ömer Engin Lütem. While it is nominally independent from the government, it was established with the involvement of YÖK,<sup>428</sup> and many of its contributors are retired diplomats and former government officials. ERAREN was originally situated within the larger Eurasian Strategic Studies Institute (*Avrasya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi*, ASAM),<sup>429</sup> which also has researchers who work on the Armenian question, but in 2009 ERAREN became an independent think tank. Among its main activities, ERAREN publishes a quarterly journal called *Armenian Studies/Ermeni Araştırmaları*, which is available in both English and Turkish; it has published several academic books on different

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<sup>426</sup> This committee's existence seems to be a quasi-secret, so most officials that I interviewed said that they did not know anything about ASİMKK, but other interviewees referred to the committee and/or mentioned that certain decisions were made by this committee.

<sup>427</sup> Author's interview with Turkish researcher [T-9], Ankara, April 2008.

<sup>428</sup> For example, one of the academics who worked at ERAREN when it was first founded was contacted by YÖK and asked to leave his academic position at a Turkish university to work at ERAREN (Author's interview with Turkish researcher [T-9], Ankara, April 2008).

<sup>429</sup> In a recent TESEV report, Ferhat Ünlü details the myriad connections of ASAM board members to the Turkish military and security establishment, highlighting how this think tank is more an extension of the state than an independent 'societal' organization (Ünlü 2006: 195-8).



aspects of the Armenian question; and it has organized academic conferences to build networks among Turkish academics working on the Armenian question.<sup>430</sup>

### Publishing defenses and marshalling evidence to support the official narrative

Replicating the strategy initiated in the 1980s, official efforts since 2001 have focused even more than in earlier phases on publishing books on the Armenian question, particularly books that counter arguments and evidence underlying claims of genocide. This effort has been loosely coordinated by ASİMKK,<sup>431</sup> and has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of official publications on the Armenian question. There has been a nearly twofold increase (from 15 to 28) in the number of official publications between the late 1990s and the first five years of the new millennium. In particular, the state archives (*Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri*) and the military archives (ATASE) published a number of books of documents on the Armenian question (nine and five, respectively, between 2001 and 2005). And while the number of books published by the archives has increased in general,<sup>432</sup> the increase in publications by the archives on the Armenian question is at least in part related to ASİMKK's activities.<sup>433</sup> Moreover, this trend has been accompanied by an increase (to seven) in the number of government agencies involved. For example, the Turkish Parliament (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*, TBMM) has published several books and reports on the Armenian question in the past few years, which is new.

In addition, there has been an explosion in the number of quasi-official publications, by the Turkish Historical Society and by ERAREN. Since 2002 the TTK has refocused its efforts on the Armenian question at the request of ASİMKK,<sup>434</sup> establishing an 'Armenian Desk' within the Society in that year (Özdemir 2008: 78), and striving to produce research that responds to arguments underlying the claim of genocide,<sup>435</sup> and that is based on the analysis of books and documents in both foreign and domestic archives (Özdemir 2008: 4). Reflecting this latter point, Hikmet Özdemir, who was the head of the TTK's Armenian Desk from 2002 to 2007, reports that in this period, he and the other three researchers who worked on the desk conducted research in archives in England, Switzerland, the US and in Germany (2008: 78). As a result of this focus, the TTK published fifteen books on the topic in the five-year period from 2001 to 2005, compared with two books in each of the prior two five-year periods (1991-95 and 1996-2000).<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [24b], Ankara, March 2009. Özdemir writes that ERAREN organized two major academic conferences on the Armenian question, in 2002 and in 2004 (2008: 80-1).

<sup>431</sup> Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24b], Ankara, March 2009.

<sup>432</sup> Author's interview with high-level Turkish official [T-29], Ankara, March 2009.

<sup>433</sup> Moreover, one interviewee said that the TTK has been working with the archives in Turkey to publish archival materials related to the Armenian question. They want to have these materials ready for when an historians' commission between Turks and Armenians is formed, especially given that Armenians have a lot of archival materials published and analyzed, whereas the Turks have not until recently (Author's interview with historian at the Turkish Historical Society [T-23], Ankara, March 2009).

<sup>434</sup> One interviewee told me that ASİMKK asked the TTK to work on the Armenian question and publish work that would respond to Armenian claims, since previously, Turkish work on the topic had been random, with people writing on varied, and often narrow or local, aspects of the topic, which was of little value in responding to and attempting to refute Armenian claims / the Armenian thesis (Author's interview with historian at the Turkish Historical Society [T-23], Ankara, March 2009).

<sup>435</sup> Author's interview with historian at the Turkish Historical Society [T-23], Ankara, March 2009.

<sup>436</sup> These trends can be observed in Figure 4.1 (in Chapter 4).

In addition, quasi-official institutions have continued to encourage Turkish academics to work on the Armenian question, which is a further example of how societal actors have helped support the official narrative. One reflection of this has been the striking increase in the number of academic conferences organized on the topic since 2001: Between 2001 and 2007, 13 academic conferences on topics related to the Armenian question were held, compared to only six conferences that were organized on the topic between 1994 and 2000 (Özdemir 2008: 75-6). As mentioned above, several of these conferences were organized by ERAREN.<sup>437</sup> Moreover, the Turkish Historical Society has supported some academics who work on this topic at various universities in Turkey. The type of support is varied, including support for photocopying and other research expenses, support for graduate studies, and publication support. More importantly, if the resultant work is of good enough quality, the TTK publishes it.<sup>438</sup> The TTK also sometimes asks one of these scholars to work on a particular topic related to the Armenian question, if (for example) there is a topic that Armenian scholars have written on but for which there is no research by Turkish academics.<sup>439</sup>

And finally, the number of popular (i.e., non-academic and non-official) books published on the Armenian question in Turkey increased almost two and a half times over the previous five-year period: from 27 books published between 1996 and 2000, to 67 books published between 2001 and 2005. This trend can be observed in the uppermost (black) line in Figure 5.1 (below). Notably, while part of this increase is attributable to private publishers' and writers' attempts to capitalize on a new issue of public interest since 2000,<sup>440</sup> several interviewees mentioned that part of this increase might have been funded and/or encouraged by the Turkish government.

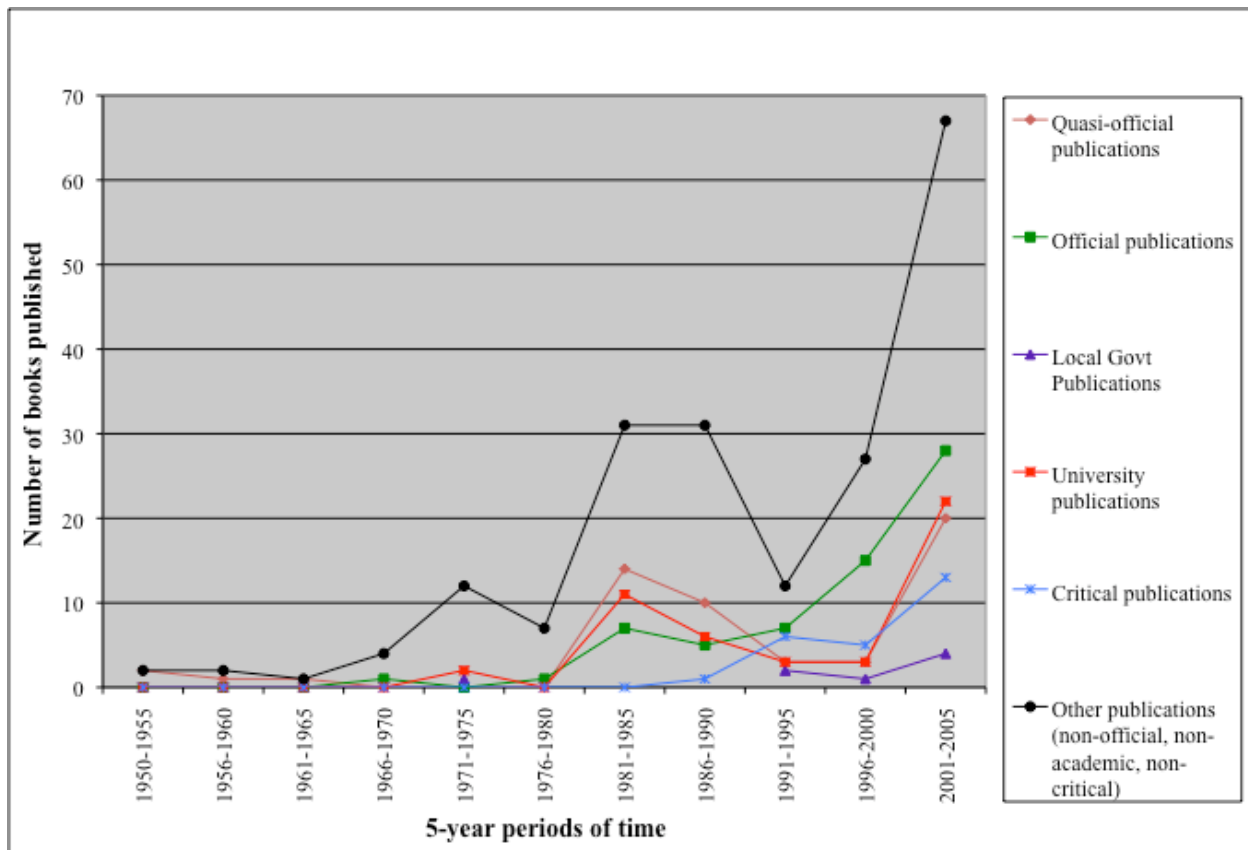
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<sup>437</sup> Of note is the fact that the conferences organized by ERAREN were only open to Turkish scholars, so that those who were working on the topic would have a chance to get to know each other (Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24b], Ankara, March 2009.)

<sup>438</sup> Some recent examples of such work include books by Hasan Dilan (2005-06), Taha Niyazi Karaca (2005), and Ferudun Ata (2005). Ata's work is on the court marshals in Istanbul, on which I was told that there previously was no other book in Turkish, aside from Dadrian and Akçam's work. As a result, the TTK was pleased that Ata's book was published (Author's interview with historian at the Turkish Historical Society [T-23], Ankara, March 2009).

<sup>439</sup> Author's interview with historian at the Turkish Historical Society [T-23], Ankara, March 2009.

<sup>440</sup> Author's interview with researcher [T-22b], Istanbul, April 2009.



**Figure 5.1. Trends in publications by type, 1950-2005**

### Teaching the official narrative to Turkish students and citizens

As in the 1980s, in the past decade Turkish officials have used the national educational system to inculcate the official narrative in the next generation. At the time of ASİMİKK's formation, the Turkish politician Devlet Bahçeli stated that one of its purposes was to “ensure that young people are informed about the past, present, and future of unfounded allegations of genocide” (European Stability Initiative 2009: 7). Reflecting this focus, one of three working groups formed under the aegis of ASİMİKK was the National Education Working Group (Zarif 2003). Thus in 2002, “The National Education Ministry...decided to teach issues related to so-called Armenian genocide claims ... to elementary and high school pupils ... to make students more aware of the issues and lobby activities related to ‘Armenian Genocide Claims’” (*Turkish Daily News* 2002b).<sup>441</sup> The following year, in 2003, the MEB required Turkish students in every grade (including those in private Armenian schools) to write an essay refuting the genocide claims of Armenians,<sup>442</sup> and also directed the heads of schools to invite experts to give lectures on and organize conferences that countered Armenian genocide claims, and to hold “essay contests on the ‘Armenian rebellion and activities during the First World War’” (Kaya 2009: 27; Zarif 2003).

<sup>441</sup> These policies were announced in two Instruction and Education Board decisions: nos. 272 and 273, both dated 14 June 2002; and communicated in detail in the July 2002 and August 2002 issues of the *Tebliğler Dergisi* (no. 2538, pp. 530-555; and no. 2539, pp. 702-703, respectively.)

<sup>442</sup> According to a 2009 report on minorities in Turkey's education system, however, “Armenian schools informed the Ministry of National Education that they would not apply this circular in their schools” (Kaya 2009: 27).

Schools have complied with these directives, holding numerous conferences on the Armenian question in the past few years (e.g., Çakır 2003), and annual essay and poetry competitions about the genocide claims. Moreover, the Ministry organized mandatory seminars for teachers, to prepare them to answer questions about genocide claims, and distributed a brochure with guidelines about points that should and should not be used in trying to shape public opinion on this issue (*Ozgur Politika* 2003). Finally, in the recent comprehensive curriculum reforms, the National Security Council rejected many proposed changes in the sections about Armenians and the Armenian question.<sup>443</sup>

#### Gaining international support for the official narrative

In the last element of this strategic framework, Turkish diplomats have continued to cultivate international support for the official narrative from academics, politicians and organizations, especially in western states such as the US and Israel. This has involved financial and administrative support for organizations that back the Turkish government's interests, financial support for research that does not criticize official policies on sensitive topics such as the Armenian question (Matossian 2008a and 2008b), and the employment of powerful public relations firms and lobbyists to advocate on Turkey's behalf, especially in the US.<sup>444</sup> Most notably, recent efforts to suppress references to the genocide have taken on a legal dimension, with the Turkish Coalition of American and other Turkish groups launching a number of lawsuits claiming that references to the genocide caused injury to particular parties, including claims of libel and defamation. Most (but not all) of these suits have failed legally, but they have at the same time partially succeeded by escalating the potential costs for scholars and others who work on the issue of the genocide and thereby encouraging self-censorship in some and deterring others from working on the issue at all.

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<sup>443</sup> Author's interview with academic [T-18], Ankara, March 2009.

<sup>444</sup> See: Singer 2009; Holthouse 2008; Edmonds and Giraldi 2009.

## – Chapter 6 – ‘History issues’ in Postwar Japan

### *Introduction*

The official Japanese narrative of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War<sup>445</sup> brings out many of the complexities of the processes through which official narratives of dark pasts evolve over time. Over time, a range of factors has been important in shaping how this narrative has evolved, including: international structural arrangements and changes, pressures for acknowledgement and apologies by victim states, continuities (and changes) in political leadership within Japan, conservative and progressive activism on ‘history issues’ within Japan, right-wing ultra-nationalism in Japan, and the orientation of the Japanese media. And yet, these factors have not equally or similarly influenced the trajectory of Japan’s official narrative over the course of the postwar period. Attempting to pull together these various factors into a coherent whole, my analysis of the trajectory of this narrative reveals five central points. *First*, international pressures, especially by China, have led Japanese officials to consider changing the official narrative, but the source of the pressure and the demands made are not sufficient indicators of the content of changes that have been made in the official narrative. *Second*, structural factors at both the domestic and international levels have strongly reinforced continuity in the narrative over time. Moreover, changes in major structural supports – like the end of the dominance of the Liberal Democratic Party in domestic politics, the death of Emperor Hirohito, or the end of the Cold War – can often lead to shifts in the official narrative, but the occurrence and extent of change varies. *Third*, official actors – particularly bureaucrats and national political leaders – have reproduced the official narrative over time. They are the central agents of the official narrative, and they are primarily status quo-oriented. That said, officials in Japan have not been as strongly motivated to defend the official narrative as in Turkey. As a result, Japanese officials have been both more likely to change the official narrative, and less actively involved in strategically defending the content of the narrative than Turkish officials. *Fourth*, societal actors across the political spectrum in Japan have played active roles in shaping the content of the narrative as it has evolved in the postwar period. In contrast to the Turkish case, societal actors have contested and debated Japan’s war responsibility and memory from the very beginning, and have been key agents of both change and continuity in Japan’s narrative. And *finally*, my analysis of the trajectory of this narrative and the forces that have shaped it highlights the complex feedback effects at play, both between the official narrative and societal actors, and between different groups of societal actors. At a number of junctures, domestic activism has arisen in response to changes in the official narrative or in the set of factors that shape the official narrative. At other junctures, individuals and groups have gotten involved in contesting this issue in response to the actions of another societal actors or group. Crucially, however, both responses have, with time, fed back and influenced official actors’ shaping of the narrative at later points.

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<sup>445</sup> As I explain later in this chapter, these two narratives are fundamentally interrelated, which is why I have chosen to analyze them together. Throughout these chapters, I sometimes refer to Japan’s narrative of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War using the shorthand ‘Japan’s narrative,’ since I am treating them as a single narrative.

## *Existing explanations*

In this section, I briefly outline the scope of existing scholarship on history issues in East Asia, and then focus in on the two most commonly advanced variables in accounts seeking to trace changes in Japan's memories of the war: structural factors and pressures by victim states. I argue that these factors are not sufficient to understand the *content* of the official narrative's trajectory over the past sixty years. Then, I sketch the framework for my own arguments, and for the analysis that follows in this and the next two chapters.

Over the past thirty years, a large and sophisticated body of scholarship on various dimensions of Japan's WWII legacy has accumulated. While this work is extensive, certain patterns and preoccupations have characterized much of the study of history issues in East Asia. By and large, scholars of have looked *not at official narratives*, but at societal attitudes toward history issues,<sup>446</sup> at the role of history issues in bilateral or trilateral relations,<sup>447</sup> at a particular 'site' in which controversies over history are played out,<sup>448</sup> or at the historiography of the massacre, both within Japan and also in other countries.<sup>449</sup> Moreover, many scholars have approached the politics and history related to these controversies from a holistic perspective, including official and unofficial, political and social factors within the scope of analysis (e.g., Saaler 2005; Seaton 2007). In contrast, other studies have focused on particular aspects of debates over 'history issues' in East Asian and Japanese politics. Such fine-grained studies have analyzed domestic debates over history and national identity (e.g., Seraphim 2006; Shibuichi 2008), the history of textbook controversies and the coverage of history issues in Japanese textbooks,<sup>450</sup> the history and politics surrounding the Yasukuni Shrine,<sup>451</sup> and the politics of official apology statements made by Japanese politicians and political bodies (Yamazaki 2006). Together, these studies have contributed deep contextual understanding and detailed historical and political interpretations to the growing, nuanced understanding of debates over history issues in East Asian and Japanese politics. Moreover, they have captured subtle changes in Japanese memory and in Japanese opinions about war responsibility and guilt, and uncovered the intricate political dynamics of recent controversies over history issues, in particular in Sino-Japanese and Japan-Korea relations.

Nevertheless, *official* narratives have rarely been studied as a broader dependent variable that captures the overarching government policy on aspects of Japan's WWII legacies. Instead, government officials' statements on and apologies for history issues, the coverage of WWII-related events in textbooks and official commemorations *have* been extensively scrutinized, but often in isolation from other indicators of the official position.<sup>452</sup> And in terms of independent

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<sup>446</sup> See: Seaton 2007; Saaler 2005; Seraphim 2006.

<sup>447</sup> See: Whiting 1989; Rose 2005 and 1998; He 2009; Lind 2008.

<sup>448</sup> See: Breen 2008; Takahashi 2006; Jeans 2005; Nozaki 2008; Barnard 2003.

<sup>449</sup> See: Yoshida 2006b; Fogel 2000b; Wakabayashi 2007b; Kitamura 2007; Yang 1990, 1999, 2001; Yamamoto 2000.

<sup>450</sup> See: Rose 1998; Nozaki 2008; Barnard 2003; Hein and Selden 2000.

<sup>451</sup> See: Breen 2008; Takahashi 2006; Saaler 2005.

<sup>452</sup> An exception is the work of the historian Takashi Yoshida, which painstakingly traces the arc of Japanese historiography on the Nanjing Massacre. While his analysis does not focus systematically on the official historiography, he carefully follows the trajectories of both the political and societal dynamics that have shaped the official historiography. As a result, my own analysis is indebted to his work.

variables, scholars have identified a set of factors that have shaped official and public memories of the war in Japan. My project builds on some of these studies, pulling together the various pieces to identify the factors that have shaped both changes and continuities in the trajectory of this narrative over the postwar period. Before getting to the details of my argument and of this case, in the next few paragraphs I outline why two commonly identified independent variables – international structural factors and external pressures – are not sufficient explanations for the changes and continuities that I have identified in the trajectory of Japan’s official narrative.

As other scholars have argued, *structural factors* have set patterns of Japan’s memory politics and then prompted changes in those patterns at later dates. These include: the postwar settlement (Benfell 2002); the structure of the international system, especially Cold War alliances and priorities; and time, both in the form of generational changes (Seraphim 2006) and in terms of major anniversaries of significant events in the war. Most prominently, Cold War politics played a determining role in establishing Japan’s official narrative, and in maintaining the political dynamics that governed its trajectory in the subsequent decades. And yet, the structural nature of these factors gives little leverage in grasping the inconsistencies and contradictions in the trajectory of this narrative over time. For example, when looking at domestic structural factors, there have been shifts in aspects of the official narrative when the majority party in power has changed in Japan (i.e., in August 1993, April 1994, June 1994 and January 1996), but there have also been shifts at other times (e.g., under Prime Minister Koizumi from 2001 and under Prime Minister Nakasone from 1980.)<sup>453</sup> Moreover, there have been changes in the official narrative when new Prime Ministers take office in Japan, but not always. For instance, the Liberal Democratic Party PM Hashimoto, who took office in 1996 and followed the Socialist PM Murayama, did not reverse the change in the official narrative that was introduced with Murayama’s seminal official apology for Japan’s “colonial rule and aggression” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1995). Moreover, structural factors offer little insight into how, how much and in what direction the narrative changes, when change does arise.

Another consequential political factor in shaping Japan’s official narrative of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War has been *external pressure by other states*. Since the early 1980s, complaints and pressure from victim states – especially China and South Korea – have increased the attention to Japan’s official narratives of the Second World War. In so doing, Japan’s official and public narratives have become the focus of international and transnational contestation, and have become important issues in Japan’s bilateral relations with China, South Korea and other Asian nations. In the past three decades since the internationalization of these so-called ‘history issues,’ pressure by other states has at times led Japanese officials to change how WWII-related events, or the entire war, is described and commemorated. Some analysts have even argued that external pressure is the primary source of change in Japan’s official narratives. For example, the Japan specialist Caroline Rose writes: “As with the textbook issue, and the forced labourer compensation cases ... , unless the Japanese government comes under direct pressure from another government, it is unlikely that a political

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<sup>453</sup> I should note that the shifts referred to here do not necessarily register as changes on the continuum that I have constructed, since the continuum is based on a basket of indicators. As a result, a slight change in one indicator – e.g., in textbooks – might not be counted as a ‘change’ in the narrative if other indicators – e.g. official statements and commemorations – do not reflect the same shift. That said, I refer to such subtle shifts here, since they nevertheless shed light on the processes of interest.

settlement will be reached” (2005: 90). Even more interestingly, HONDA Katsuichi,<sup>454</sup> a prominent Japanese journalist whose writings significantly influenced public debate about aspects of Japan’s war responsibility, especially in relation to the Nanjing Massacre, admitted in the introduction to the English translation of a book of his writings about the Nanjing Massacre that he hoped that the publication of the book in English would generate outside interest that would lead to renewed pressure on Japan to better address its dark past. He wrote: “It is an unfortunate fact that, throughout Japan’s history, it has never been possible for the people to alter the nation’s power structure on their own: all the important transformations have come about through *gaiatsu*, or ‘outside pressure.’ Even the sketchy descriptions of the Nanjing Massacre in Japanese textbooks came about through external pressure from China and the government’s grudging acknowledgement” (Honda 1999: xxvi-xxvii).<sup>455</sup>

And yet, focusing on such external pressure does not account for the whole, or even the most important parts of the processes by which Japan’s official narrative has changed over time. This is the case for two main reasons. First, not all of the changes in Japan’s narrative of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War are coincident with or subsequent to moments of external pressure. As I detail in this and in the next two chapters, Japan’s war responsibility and of the nature of the war have been central issues of concern for a variety of domestic groups in Japan. Moreover, these issues have been politically contested, intellectually debated and investigated by individuals and groups within Japanese society from as early as the 1950s. As a result, some changes in Japan’s official narrative have arisen as a result of pressures created by the efforts of domestic groups, with little to no involvement of international groups or bilateral pressures.

Second, even in instances when external pressure has pushed Japanese officials to consider changing an aspect of its narrative, domestic political constraints and pressures are often key to understanding *whether change occurs* and the *content and direction of change* that does occur. For example,

“in the run-up to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbour, the Japanese Foreign Ministry decided it was time to have a standard form of words that would be applicable to everyone in the AsiaPacific region ... . The new formula ... was unveiled by the Foreign Minister, Michio Watanabe, in early December [1991]. In an interview with the Washington Post, he said: ‘We felt deep remorse (*fukaku hansei*) about the unbearable suffering and sorrow Japan inflicted on the American people and the peoples of Asia and the Pacific during the Pacific War.’ A source in Japan said: ‘What we were trying to do in this exercise was find a form of words which went further than mere ‘heartfelt sorrow’ but which did not suggest to some people in our country that we had totally negated our entire past history. There was a danger such an argument might have been raised if we had used the word ‘apology’” (Jenkins 1992).

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<sup>454</sup> In these chapters I follow the practice of listing family names first when writing Japanese and Chinese names, except when citing English-language publications that do not follow this practice. Thus, when first and last names are given, to avoid the otherwise inevitable confusion I type the last name in capital letters, while in quoted passages I underline the last name.

<sup>455</sup> The influence of ‘*gaiatsu*,’ which means ‘foreign pressure,’ has long been a topic of interest and discussion in the context of Japanese politics. See, e.g.: Schoppa 1993.



Another such example was in 1995, when the coalition government led by MURAYAMA Tomiichi, who was the first Socialist prime minister (PM) in Japan's postwar history, tried to issue a sweeping, Diet-sanctioned apology for Japan's aggression and atrocities in World War II (WWII). When this intention was announced, powerful societal groups and political factions within the Diet mobilized in opposition. The historian Franziska Seraphim writes that "Longstanding nationalist interest groups such as the Izokukai and the Association of Shinto Shrines and their various spinoffs organized themselves into the National Committee, brought prominent business figures on board as advisors, and rallied conservative Diet representatives from the LDP [Liberal Democratic Party] and the new Frontier Party (Shinshinto) to oppose any resolution of remorse and apology that 'unilaterally incriminated' Japan" (2006: 277). This opposition led to a watered-down statement of remorse from the Diet, which was not the apology that Murayama had desired or promised. In this instance, the involvement of powerful interest groups in mobilizing public support in opposition to a broad apology statement by the Diet; their connections with powerful Diet politicians; and the longstanding opposition to such a step by groups among Diet members from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) together shaped the eventual compromise resolution adopted by the Diet.<sup>456</sup>

Thus, while two external factors – timing and recent international pressures over Japan's narrative – were at play in the Foreign Ministry's decision to come up with a new formulation, the preferences of domestic actors were also a crucial consideration.

### ***Overview of arguments in Chapters 6, 7 and 8***

In this and the next two chapters, I trace the trajectory of Japan's narrative from 1952<sup>457</sup> to the present. As noted above, these chapters show that international pressure – especially from victim states such as China – can be a crucial catalyst for change. But, they also highlight how such pressure only indicates that change is *more likely* to occur in the subsequent period, but is not the most important determinant of the content or extent of change that might result. Moreover, there are two key differences between the Turkish and the Japanese cases on this point. First, the more powerful the victim state is, in economic and political terms, the greater the impact of its demands and pressures for change will be. China is a much larger and increasingly more powerful state in relation to Japan (than Armenia is to Turkey), which has meant that Japanese officials have a greater interest in acceding to Chinese demands vis-à-vis history issues than do Turkish officials vis-à-vis Armenia's demands. That said, there is not a strict correlation between the power of the victim state and the responsiveness of the perpetrator state to their demands.<sup>458</sup> And second, the greater number of victim states in the Japanese case has meant that Japan has experienced more bilateral pressure from victim states than has Turkey, for which there is only one victim state, strictly speaking, and it has only been independent since the end of the Cold War. Thus, at moments when the Chinese government has objected to the coverage of the Nanjing Massacre in Japan's textbooks (for example), other victim states have also raised

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<sup>456</sup> Moreover, in contrast to the norm for Diet resolutions, this resolution was *not* approved by a unanimous vote, and it was only voted on by one house of the Diet (Mukae 1996).

<sup>457</sup> As noted in Chapter 1, my analysis in this case begins in 1952, when the US occupation of Japan formally ended and Japan regained its sovereignty.

<sup>458</sup> In the Japanese case, one consideration that has influenced whether and how Japanese officials respond to Chinese demands has been whether the former believe that concessions will lead to the cessation or diminishment of Chinese demands.

protests over the same textbooks (although not necessarily to the same passages in those textbooks.) This has had the effect of increasing the intensity of victim state pressure on Japan, but has not necessarily led to concessions to all of the demands, or even to all of the protesting victim states.

In addition, these chapters offer indications of the influence of structural factors – especially the dominance of the LDP in Japanese politics, the longevity of Emperor Hirohito, and the political alliance in the Cold War – while at the same time offering ample evidence of changes and continuities that have occurred in spite of these structuring factors.<sup>459</sup>

Moreover, these chapters demonstrate that government ministries – particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health and Welfare – and other official actors – namely, the Emperor, the Prime Minister, and the Chief Cabinet Secretary – have produced this official narrative over time. However, in contrast to the Turkish case, officials have spent little effort in proactively disseminating and cultivating support for the official narrative.

One factor that accounts for part of this difference between the two cases is that, whereas Turkish officials fear being made to pay reparations and/or cede land or territory, Japanese officials have legal protections in the form of international treaties with former victim states, which have made this less of an issue than it has been for Turkish officials. As a result, Japanese officials – particularly in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – have long argued that the issue of compensation was settled in the San Francisco Treaty and in the individual treaties that Japan signed with former victim states in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. They further argue that because the issue had been settled, claims of individual compensation would not be considered.<sup>460</sup> Moreover, these officials argue that the government should not compensate any individual victims, because to do so would open the door to millions of potential claimants.<sup>461</sup> Moreover, until 1995, this concern partially accounted for Japanese officials' reluctance to issue a formal official apology to its former victims (Field 1995: 414). In contrast, in the Turkish case, there are no treaties that have clearly settled the question of compensation. Moreover, in the Turkish case, because of the massive, state-organized appropriation and redistribution of Armenian property; descendants of Armenian victims and survivors could make claims against an untold number of properties, businesses and homes within Turkey. In contrast, in Japan, the only significant risk of material claims is against Japanese businesses that used slave labor in the war. Homes, properties and

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<sup>459</sup> An additional point is that international normative factors are less relevant than in the Turkish case, because the crimes in the Japanese case are more varied and cannot be categorized (from an international legal perspective) with a term as strong as genocide. That said, since the mid-1990s, transnational activist networks have played a part in putting pressure on Japan, especially on the 'comfort women' issue, but also on the issue of the Nanjing Massacre and other atrocities committed in the context of the Second Sino-Japanese War. This is discussed in Chapter 8.

<sup>460</sup> For example, one article notes that "in court, responding to the two-dozen suits that war victims have filed seeking compensation, the government's lawyers cite these country-to-country reparations and argue that the claims are too old to be valid" (Barr 1995b).

<sup>461</sup> One problem with this policy, from a public relations perspective, is that every ten years the Japanese government has offered bonds to survivors and families of deceased Japanese veterans. Thus, in 1995 it was reported that the government offered, "bonds worth 400,000 yen (\$4,545) to each of the 1.51 million war-bereaved families and living veterans who sustained injuries during the war – a \$6.8 billion gesture" (Barr 1995). And while it is true that governments bear primary responsibility to their own citizens, this generosity has put the government's refusal to offer any official compensation to individual victims of Japanese war crimes into starker relief.

entire villages in Japan are not at risk, however. Finally, Turkish officials have long feared that the state of Armenia might try to claim several provinces in eastern Anatolia. While such a claim is unlikely to gain traction in the post-WWII international system, it has been one of the most important motivating factors behind Turkish officials' active defense of the official narrative. In contrast, in the Japanese case, the territories that have been in dispute (with China, South Korea and Russia) are largely uninhabited islands, *not* vast swaths of the country's main islands.

More so than in the Turkish case, a significant source of continuity has come from constraints that have been imposed on official actors by societal and non-official political actors within Japan.<sup>462</sup> As a result, while legitimacy concerns have not been as significant for Japanese officials as they have been for Turkish officials, stability concerns have been an issue, mainly stemming from the strong preferences of nationalist interest groups that are important supporters of many conservative politicians. In some instances these societal actors have constrained official actors' scope for changing the official narrative, while at other times politicians have worked with these powerful societal groups to constrain the scope of change by official actors (i.e., by those politicians who legitimately speak for and as the state.)<sup>463</sup> In contrast to the Turkish case, however, many of these societal actors have gotten involved in defending the official narrative *not* at the behest or invitation of state actors, but out of their own motivations and objectives.

These chapters also highlight how the content of and changes in Japan's narrative have been shaped in the context of the push and pull of domestic contestation.<sup>464</sup> Thus, while a set of state actors has been involved in shaping the content of the official narrative over time, continuity in the official narrative has been strongly reinforced by feedback effects from conservative and nationalist domestic groups that have mobilized to support the official narrative and to push for diminished coverage of atrocities like the Nanjing Massacre. At the same time, in response both to the activism and influence of conservative groups, as well as to the production of the official narrative by state actors, leftist groups have pushed for change in the official narrative. This implies two points. First, that articulations of the official narrative, or changes therein, can influence the creation or mobilization of actors whose activities later feed back and influence the official narrative. And second, that the push and pull of activism and research by both liberal and conservative groups shape the changes that state actors have considered and made in Japan's official narrative, both by generating *constraints on* and *pressure for* change, as well as by shaping the domestic context of information and opinions within which the narrative is produced.

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<sup>462</sup> These non-official defenders of the official position have included: leading, conservative politicians; groups within the Diet; military and veterans' associations, especially the Japan War-Bereaved Veterans Association (*Nihon Izokukai*); influential and politically well-connected religious and political organizations, especially the Association of Shinto Shrines and the umbrella organization Japan Conference (*Nippon Kaigi*); conservative media outlets; revisionist history organizations, especially *Tsukurukai*; and right-wing ultra-nationalists. Moreover, there are numerous interconnections between many of these actors.

<sup>463</sup> For example, when speaking about the interest group *Nihon Izokukai*, one interviewee noted that there is a question as to whether it is in fact very powerful (as it has often been argued), or whether the pressure of this interest group is a convenient excuse for LDP politicians to take revisionist, nationalist positions that would otherwise bring more direct criticism. This interviewee argued that the truth is probably that *Nihon Izokukai* is both powerful and a convenient cover for nationalist LDP politicians (Author's interview with *New York Times* journalist [J-2], Tokyo, July 2008).

<sup>464</sup> Yoshida's work (2000 and 2006b) also demonstrates this dynamic.

The remainder of this chapter proceeds as follows: The next section offers an historical overview of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War, which are the events that underlie this narrative. I also discuss the scope of historical debate over these events, and the inter-relationship between the various narrative strands related to the war. In the following two sections, I outline the indicators through which I have tracked the trajectory of this narrative over the past six decades, and the data on which my analysis is based. Then, I analyze the domestic actors and political factors that shaped the official narrative that was first established in the early 1950s, and I outline the subsequent six phases of the official narrative, which are discussed in detail in the next two chapters.

### ***Historical background and debate***

#### *The Second Sino-Japanese War, 1931-1945*

The Second Sino-Japanese War was a conflict fought on the Chinese mainland between the armies of Imperial Japan and the Republic of China. The war unofficially began in 1931 with the Manchurian Incident, escalated to total war in 1937 following the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, and ended in 1945, when Japan surrendered to the Allied Powers and Japanese troops left the Chinese mainland.<sup>465</sup> Japan invaded China as part of its effort in the first half of the twentieth century to establish a colonial empire in East Asia, and with the related goal of extracting valuable resources from China and securing a new market for Japanese goods (Gordon 2006: 140).

During this fifteen-year period, tens of millions of Chinese people died; many Chinese prisoners of war (POWs) were executed; tens of thousands of (or possibly as many as 200,000) Chinese women were raped by Japanese soldiers, some in isolated incidents and others repeatedly in the system of sexual slavery (the so-called ‘comfort women’ system) that was set up by the Japanese Army (Rose 2005: 5, 88); approximately 40,000 Chinese people were forced to be slave laborers (Rose 2005: 5; Wan 2006: 305), during which many died; more than 100,000 Chinese are estimated to have been killed through the biological and chemical warfare programs conducted in China by Japan; and live medical and ‘scientific’ experiments were conducted on Chinese people. Also during this time, over a million Japanese soldiers were sent to fight in China, and nearly 2 million Japanese soldiers perished in the war.<sup>466</sup> And at the end of the war, “Some 2.6 million Japanese were in China ..., 1.1 million dispersed through Manchuria” (Dower 1999: 49).

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<sup>465</sup> At the time of the invasion, China was in the midst of the civil war between the Communists and Nationalists.

<sup>466</sup> Ienaga reports: “According to statistics released by the Ministry of Health and Welfare in the Diet in 1956, Japanese deaths from July 1937 to August 1945 from combat, combat-related injuries, and war-related fatal illnesses (military and civilians working for the military) amounted to about 2.3 million. The figure does not include tens of thousands missing and never accounted for” (1978: 152). Moreover, Dower writes that “the number of deaths usually cited for the armed forces—1.74 million up to the time of surrender—is probably fairly accurate....All told, probably at least 2.7 million servicemen and civilians died as a result of the war, roughly 3 to 4 percent of the country’s 1941 population of around 74 million. Millions more were injured, sick, or seriously malnourished. Approximately 4.5 million servicemen demobilized in 1945 were identified as being wounded or ill, and eventually some three hundred thousand were given disability pensions” (1999: 45).

### *Debate and discourses related to the war*

As a sign of the intensity of debate over the interpretation of these events, the broader conflict within which this war was fought is known by several different monikers, which vary in temporal and geographic scope, and are often tied to different political orientations and interpretations of the underlying events. The ‘Greater East Asian War’ is typically used by Japanese conservatives, but encompasses a range of events, including the colonization of Korea. In contrast, terms used by moderates or leftists include the ‘Fifteen-Year War,’ which refers to the entire period of the war fought by Japan, from 1931 through 1945; and the ‘Pacific War,’<sup>467</sup> which refers to the part of World War II that was fought in the Pacific theater from 1941 until 1945.<sup>468</sup> Similarly, the ‘Asia-Pacific War’ is commonly used by Japanese academics, and comprises all of the Asian countries in which Japanese troops fought (Saaler 2005: 16). Finally, ‘World War II’ refers to the period from 1939 to 1945, and comprises all of the theaters of conflict, not just the Pacific theater.

In addition to the different terms used to describe the underlying conflict, there are several issues related to Japan’s role and conduct in the Second Sino-Japanese War and the broader Asia-Pacific War that have become topics of debate and controversy. Importantly, while these different narrative strands are intertwined, and multiple narratives are often simultaneously activated in a single debate, they are not synonymous and single issues are sometimes debated in isolation from other narratives (Thomas Berger 2010: 198). The broadest theme concerns the nature of Japan’s involvement and conduct in the war, i.e., “whether or not the war Japan fought was one of aggressive territorial expansion, or whether it was, on the other hand, a war that was unselfishly fought by Japan in order to liberate fellow Asians from Western imperialism and white colonialism” (Barnard 2003: 2). Others involve: the extent of official Japanese involvement in the so-called ‘comfort women’ system,<sup>469</sup> responsibility for the secret biological and chemical warfare programs conducted during the war,<sup>470</sup> responsibility for the suffering of wartime slave laborers (Underwood 2005), the nature of Japan’s colonization of Korea and other Asian countries in the region, and the treatment of POWs captured by Japanese forces.<sup>471</sup> Moreover, regarding Japanese experiences and suffering in the war, debates concern: the treatment and valuation of the lives of Japanese citizens (especially Okinawans and kamikaze

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<sup>467</sup> This term was used by US authorities in the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (Benfell 2002), and according to Nozaki, “became popular among the people of Japan” (2002: 50).

<sup>468</sup> Burrell (1995) discusses these distinctions.

<sup>469</sup> See: Hayashi 2008; Hata 2007; Hicks 1995; Soh 1996.

<sup>470</sup> See: Tanaka 1996: 135-165; Ienaga 1978: 188-190; Tsuchiya 2006; Rose 2005: 91. Unit 731 was one of several secret medical units that researched and developed biological and chemical weapons, and which conducted experiments using live Chinese prisoners and Allied POWs. “The Japanese Imperial Army established Unit 731 in Harbin in 1938. Set up to secretly develop biological weapons, the unit conducted grotesque medical experiments to test biological weapons on thousands of prisoners, mostly Chinese but also Russians and other nationalities. Unit 731 also participated in spreading bubonic plague in Chinese villages from 1940 to 1942. Japan was the only country that used germ warfare during World War II. The Chinese government calculated that the Japanese Imperial Army conducted germ warfare in twenty Chinese provinces and that 270,000 civilians died of diseases such as bubonic plague, cholera, and typhus. ... For years, the Japanese government denied the existence of the unit, despite a series of publications in Russian, Japanese, and English. The government finally acknowledged the existence of Unit 731, but to this day it maintains that it does not know what the unit actually did” (Wan 2006: 312).

<sup>471</sup> Tanaka writes that, “Of the estimated 350,000 prisoners under the Japanese during the war,...35,756 died while detained, a death rate of about 27 percent” (1996: 2).

pilots) by the wartime government (Ienaga 1978: 181-185); the victimization of Japan, especially the US's atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the Allied firebombing and destruction of many Japanese cities, including Tokyo; the fairness of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (a.k.a. the Tokyo Trial);<sup>472</sup> and the postwar Constitution and Japan's commitment to pacifism (Katzenstein 1996; Berger 1993).

### *The focus in this project*

In this project I focus on a single narrative, that of the Nanjing Massacre, which is embedded within the broader narrative of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Despite the fact that the Nanjing Massacre was a discrete event, it has become a symbol for the entire war and a lightning rod for debates over the conduct of the Japanese Imperial Army.<sup>473</sup> The historian Takashi YOSHIDA writes that after the war, "Nanjing became the principal emblem of atrocities committed in China" (2006b: 35), and by the late 1980s, he argues that "the Nanjing Massacre had become a part of Chinese national memory and a symbol of Japan's wartime atrocities and cruelty in China" (113).<sup>474</sup> Because of this symbolism, activism and controversy related to the nature of the broader war often focuses on the facts and/or interpretation of the Nanjing Massacre. Reflecting this overlap, the official Japanese narrative of the Nanjing Massacre is fundamentally entwined with the broader narrative of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Thus, in response to pressure or protest specifically in relation to the Nanjing Massacre, the Japanese government often responds with general statements about the Second Sino-Japanese War. For example, Yamazaki writes that, "when asked recently to respond directly to charges associated with the Nanking Massacre, the Japanese Foreign Ministry replied that the 1972 Joint Communiqué between China and Japan and Prime Minister Murayama's apology in 1995 represent Japan's apology (Brooks 1999: 109-110)" (2006: 30). And yet, the Japanese government has also made explicit statements about the Nanjing Massacre, in textbook directives and coverage of the event, and in more recent official statements about the event. Thus, because of the government's statements about the Nanjing Massacre often come in the form of broader statements about the Second Sino-Japanese War, I treat the two sub-narratives as a single official narrative.

### *The Nanjing Massacre*

As noted above, the Nanjing Massacre was an event that occurred within the broader Second Sino-Japanese War. It began in late 1937, when the Japanese army invaded Nanking (as Nanjing was then called), which was then the capital of Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Nationalist forces, and extended into early 1938. In the invasion and capture of the city, Japanese soldiers massacred an estimated 100,000-200,000 civilians and POWs, and raped thousands of women.

The contours of debate over this event tend to focus on several issues: the *number* of Chinese civilians and prisoners of war killed by Japanese soldiers, the *temporal scope* of the massacre, and the *geographic scope* of the massacre (with answers to the first question closely correlating

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<sup>472</sup> See: Awaya 1991; Brook 2001; Minear 1971.

<sup>473</sup> In part, the relative importance of the Nanjing Massacre in postwar debates derives from its scope. The linguist Christopher Barnard writes that "The Rape of Nanking, in terms of numbers killed and the level of brutality, towers over all the many other atrocities committed by the Japanese during the period from 1931 to 1945" (2003: 156).

<sup>474</sup> On the symbolism of the Nanjing Massacre, see also: Bush 2007; Brook 2001: 673; Eykholt 2000: 57-8.

with a researcher's answers to the second two questions.) Furthermore, scholars also debate whether the massacre was a result of official policies of the Japanese Imperial Army, or whether it resulted from widespread atrocities perpetrated by Japanese soldiers on the ground.

A key question centers on the *number* of Chinese civilians and prisoners of war that were killed by Japanese soldiers. Estimates of the number of Chinese killed by Japanese soldiers in the course of the Nanjing Massacre range from lows of very few to several thousand, which has been argued by Japanese revisionists<sup>475</sup>; to intermediate assessments, for example by the conservative historian HATA Ikuhiko, who in 1998 maintained his estimate that there were approximately 40,000 deaths (Hata 1998); to much higher estimates in the range of 100,000 to 200,000; to the official Chinese figure of 300,000; and up to the number 450,000, which was advanced by the Chinese-American journalist Iris CHANG in her book on the topic (Iris Chang 1997).<sup>476</sup> Moreover, recent work by historians and other scholars writing in English offers estimates in the range of 100,000 to 200,000.<sup>477</sup> In 1999, Frank Gibney, the co-founder of the Pacific Basin Institute, made the following observations regarding the varied estimates of casualties in the massacre:

“As for the actual numbers of the Massacre’s victims, they keep fluctuating. HATA Ikuhiko, a respected Japanese military historian, has come up with a figure of 40,000 based on his study of Imperial Army unit histories of that time, in his book *Nanking Jiken* (Chuo Koron-sha, 1986) ..., while the researches of the Kaikosha, an organization of retired Japanese officers, set the figure at 32,000 in a 1989 study. Other Japanese writers have given far larger estimates, ranging up to 300,000. When I talked with Honda [Katsuichi] in Tokyo in 1997, I asked him for his latest appraisal. ‘*Ju su man*,’ he said. That is, something a bit over 100,000, but not approaching 200,000” (1999: xiii).

Moreover, two definitional debates that directly influence casualty estimates have occupied some scholars who work on the issue. One is the *time period* within which the massacre occurred, while another dimension of debate is over the *geographic boundaries* of the massacre. Some scholars narrowly define the time frame of the massacre, which leads to a much lower estimate

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<sup>475</sup> In the Japanese context, the term ‘revisionist’ is typically used to refer to a person or a view that seeks to play down or elide Japan’s war crimes. I will use it in this sense in my analysis of actors and views in relation to the Japanese case.

<sup>476</sup> Addressing the scope of debate among Japanese scholars, David Askew writes: “Interpretations of the Nanjing Incident in Japan are usually summarised as falling into three schools of thought, defined by the number of people each argues were massacred in Nanjing.... They are the Nanjing Incident as Illusion School..., which argues that at most several thousand were massacred in Nanjing; the Middle-of-the-Road School..., which argues that between 13,000...and 38,000-42,000...were massacred; and the Great Massacre School..., which argues...that ‘over 100,000, perhaps nearly 200,000 or even more’, were killed in Nanjing” (2002: 5).

<sup>477</sup> For example, the historian Joshua Fogel, while explicitly avoiding getting into a detailed discussion of the numbers, writes that “the contributors to this volume are all of a mind that a great massacre occurred, and whether 200,000 people were killed or 240,000 does not alter the dimensions of the horror” (2000: 6). And at the end of his comparative study of the historiography of the Nanjing Massacre, the historian Takashi YOSHIDA writes – without explicitly endorsing this description – that the prominent leftist historian KASAHARA Tokushi “believed that between 100,000 and 200,000 Chinese civilians and soldiers in Nanjing and its six neighboring counties died at the hands of Japanese soldiers between early December 1937 and March 1938” (2006b: 181). Finally, the political scientist Yinan HE writes that “more than two hundred thousand Chinese civilians and POWs were killed, and approximately twenty thousand cases of rape and numerous cases of looting and destruction took place over approximately six weeks” (2009: 117).

of the number of people killed, while others broadly define the scope of the massacre, leading to a higher estimate of the number killed. On one hand, the legal scholar David Askew defines the 'Nanjing Incident' more narrowly, as "the killing and raping of large numbers of Chinese over a relatively short period of time by the Japanese military after the city of Nanjing was captured on 13 December 1937" (2002: 2). In contrast, the journalist HONDA Katsuichi writes, "The phrase 'Nanjing Massacre' describes the atrocities that occurred after the initiation of all-out war from the first Japanese advances to the time of the occupation of Nanjing, a three-month period of atrocities that included massacres, arson, rape, looting, and indiscriminate bombing" (1999: xxv). Similarly, in an edited volume with chapters by several historians, Joshua Fogel stated in his introduction that "none of us [i.e., the contributors to the book] doubts that a great massacre occurred in and around Nanjing from December 1937 through February 1938" (2000: 5). Obviously, the shorter the time frame posited, the lower the casualty estimate is likely to be.

In terms of the *geographic boundaries* of the massacre, some scholars define the event as what occurred within the city walls, others include the area outside the city walls in their geographic definition, and still others define the event as occurring within both the city walls *and* the surrounding countryside, which can include up to six surrounding counties (Yoshida 2006b: 181). As with the time frame, the narrower the geographical boundaries defined in a given study, the lower the casualty estimate is likely to be.

Thus, the number of Chinese casualties varies tremendously, depending on both the temporal and geographic scope of a given scholar's definition of the events.<sup>478</sup> Nevertheless, the nature and scope of debate over the Nanjing Massacre comes down to more than mere definitional distinctions, and thus cannot be resolved by assuming one or another set of definitional parameters. At a more fundamental level, scholars and activists have debated why such a massacre occurred (i.e., the causes), and the level at which responsibility lies. On these issues, Barnard writes:

"Regarding ... whether the Rape was planned, or at least abetted, by the Japanese authorities, Calvocoressi *et al.* (1995: 803) write that 'The massacre was done for the most part by Japanese conscripts, unfamiliar with war, perhaps neurotically working out of their system the extreme repressions in which they had passed so much of their lives'. Even Ienaga (1978: 187) ... writes that the Rape of Nanking may have been a reaction to the fierce resistance the Japanese army had up to then been receiving from the Chinese" (2003: 56-7).

Finally, as with the naming of the broader conflict, the nomenclature used to refer to the Nanjing Massacre also varies, and frequently reveals the speaker's interpretation of the nature of the event. In addition to the 'Nanjing Massacre,' the event is also known as the Rape of Nanking, the Nanking Massacre and the Nanking Incident. According to the historian Daqing Yang,

"Generally speaking, 'the Rape of Nanking' has been used primarily in the West. Since the end of the war, the Chinese have always referred to it as *Nanjing datusha*, which they have translated as the Nanjing Massacre. In Japan, *dai gyakusatsu* (great massacre) or *gyakusatsu* (massacre) tends to confirm the magnitude of an atrocity, as do *dai zangyaku*

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<sup>478</sup> On this point, see: Askew 2007, and some of Askew's other work on the Nanjing Massacre.



(great atrocity) and *Nankin atoroshitsu* (the Nanjing atrocities). *Nankin jiken* (Nanjing incident) clearly lacks these connotations, but it is occasionally used interchangeably with other terms” (2001: 78).

### ***Methodology***

I have already described why I have chosen to focus on the interrelated narratives of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War, and that I treat them as a single narrative for the purposes of this study, so I will not rehash these points here. Before moving on, however, I want to address the skeptic who would say that the Japanese government does not have an ‘official’ narrative of the Nanjing Massacre (or the Second Sino-Japanese War.) I disagree with this criticism for two reasons. First, while Japanese officials most often discuss the broader context of the war in official statements and apologies, one can also trace a sequence of official positions that the Japanese government has taken specifically on the issue of the Nanjing Massacre. This includes: Japan’s approval of the results of the Tokyo Trial in the San Francisco Treaty; communiqués about the event in textbook directives issued by, and in coverage of the event in textbooks approved by, the Ministry of Education; positions that the government has taken in court cases concerning textbook coverage of the Nanjing Massacre and compensation for individual victims of the Nanjing Massacre; and statements about the event by the Chief Cabinet Secretary, the Foreign Minister and the Education Minister.

Moreover, in addition to the fact that Japanese officials and ministries have communicated the government’s views on this issue in a variety of ways over time, on several instances Japanese officials have explicitly stated that certain views about the war are (or are not) official. For example, in announcing textbooks that were approved by the MOE in 2006, an official in “the ministry’s textbook approval section” stated: “‘It’s only natural that school textbooks be required to present views that are in line with the official government position’” (Tabuchi 2006). At the same time, the Minister of Education stated at a press conference: “‘It is necessary for textbooks of our country to accurately describe (issues) in line with the government’s positions’” (*Kyodo News* 2006). And in an attempt to quiet a controversy over the revisionist statements of a cabinet minister, “the Government’s main spokesman, Chief Cabinet Secretary Keizo Obuchi, told a parliamentary committee that Japan’s official position continued to be that it indeed was an aggressor in World War II” (Haberman 1988).<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>479</sup> Moreover, the existence of a consciously constructed ‘official’ position is implied in the statement (quoted above) by a Ministry of Foreign Affairs official about the motivations behind the official apology statement that was offered by Prime Minister Murayama in 1995.

## *Indicators*

To trace the official Japanese narrative, I analyze the following indicators:

- 1) Official statements and actions;
- 2) Cabinet decisions;
- 3) Resolutions and bills passed in the Diet;
- 4) Instructional guidelines issued by and trends in the content of textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education;<sup>480</sup> and
- 5) Reparations and ‘regret’ money paid by Japan to war victims and victim states.

And while the statements and actions of cabinet-level politicians (other than those of the Education Minister, Foreign Minister and Chief Cabinet Secretary) and individual Diet members are those of high-level national politicians, I do not count as official many of the often highly-publicized statements and actions of governmental actors – especially those at the cabinet and Diet levels – who are not entitled to speak with the state’s voice on these issues. Instead, I track the Prime Minister’s and government’s *responses* to such statements, since the former are counted as official actions in this project.

Importantly, while in the Turkish case chapters my analysis of the dependent variable was broken down into separate discussions of the strategy and the content of the official narrative, in the Japanese case my discussion focuses on the content of the narrative. The reason for this difference is that Turkish officials have explicitly developed active strategies to defend and disseminate the official narrative of the Armenian Genocide, whereas Japanese officials’ ‘strategies’ have been much more limited. Like Turkish officials, Japanese officials have been resistant to changing the official narrative, and in some cases have worked with conservative and nationalist groups in efforts to resist change. However, unlike Turkish officials’ efforts in the early 1980s and again in the early 2000s, Japanese officials have not developed self-conscious and proactive strategies to defend the official narrative from challenges and to develop domestic and international support for their position. They have, however, consistently argued that postwar treaty agreements have ‘settled’ the issue of compensation, which is one strategy that has largely protected Japan from having to satisfy demands for individual compensation (if not from the related pressures.)

## *Research conducted*

The analysis presented in this and the next two chapters is based on an array of information gathered from various primary and secondary sources. In order to identify the content of and changes in the indicators listed above, I constructed a timeline of statements, events and other information relevant to this case over the past sixty years. To this end, I gathered and analyzed

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<sup>480</sup> Like in Turkey, the content of textbooks can be taken as ‘official,’ since “in Japan, all textbooks used in all schools up to the end of high school have to pass the official screening or authorization procedures of the Japanese Ministry of Education. The state lays down strict curricular guidelines and, by means of the textbook authorization system, maintains control over the content and language of textbooks” (Barnard 2003: 10). In 2001, “the MOE became the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology...due to a ministerial reorganization” (Nozaki 2002: 618). For ease and simplicity, I refer throughout to the Ministry of Education.

several thousand newspaper articles capturing statements and actions about the Nanjing Massacre by a range of actors in and outside Japan, including government officials, non-state groups, and individuals. I primarily searched for articles in two electronic databases: Factiva and the Foreign Broadcast Information Service.<sup>481</sup> In addition, I searched for relevant events mentioned in the Chronicles in the quarterly political news magazines *Japan Quarterly* (hereafter, *JQ*) and *Japan Echo*, and also reviewed articles analyzing relevant political events and trends that appeared in *Japan Quarterly*.<sup>482</sup> These news accounts have included direct quotations of many statements by government officials. In addition, I analyzed official statements released by the Japanese government, as well as by various domestic groups involved in/concerned about these issues.

In the summer of 2008, I spent two months in Tokyo,<sup>483</sup> where I conducted approximately 20 semi-structured interviews with different individuals who work on and are interested in history issues. In my interviews, I gathered information about motivations behind and factors that have influenced official and societal actions in relation to history issues, and probed for actors' assessments of the intended and perceived consequences of different actions. Interviewees included: conservative and liberal activists who work on various history-related issues; journalists from the *Asahi Shimbun*, the *New York Times* and the *Yomiuri Shimbun*; academics, most of whom were historians and political scientists; several diplomats; academics who have advised or worked with the Japanese government on history issues; and a lawyer who works on WWII-related victim compensation cases. Since I do not speak Japanese, I conducted some of the interviews in English, while others were conducted in Japanese with the help of my research assistant. In these latter cases, my research assistant translated my questions and the interviewees' answers during the interviews, and then typed up detailed notes after each interview.

Finally, I have reviewed the rich body of academic work that has been published in English on history issues in Japan's domestic and foreign relations, Japan's bilateral relations with China and Japan's foreign policy more broadly. These secondary sources have offered in-depth coverage of events and issues, and invaluable insights into the motivations behind and interrelationships between different history-related events and activism.

Drawing on this varied list of sources, I have been able to track changes in textbook coverage and official statements and actions in detail, which has permitted me to carefully trace and analyze the evolution of the Japanese narrative over the past sixty years. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I analyze the political factors that shaped the official narrative that was

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<sup>481</sup> I searched in Factiva using the phrase "Japan and [nan?ing massacre or nan?ing incident or rape of nan?ing]". This search returned nearly 6,000 results, comprising newspaper articles from 1978 through 2007, although the bulk of the results were from the early 1990s through 2007. I conducted searches in the *Daily Report Asia & Pacific* and the *Daily Report East Asia* databases in FBIS, using three different phrases: "Nanjing", "history war China OR history aggression Asia", and "China ADJ20 (history OR past) AND (regret OR contrition OR sorrow OR reflection OR apology)". These searches returned about 100 results and covered the period from 1974 to 1996.

<sup>482</sup> The bulk of this part of my research was conducted in *Japan Quarterly*. I surveyed most of the Chronicles that were published between 1954 and 2001, although there were some missing issues. I surveyed some of the Chronicles that appeared in *Japan Echo* from 1999, 2001 and 2008 and all that appeared between 2002 and 2007.

<sup>483</sup> While there, I was affiliated as a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Social Science at the University of Tokyo.

first established in the early 1950s, and I briefly sketch the trajectory of the official narrative over the six phases that I have identified in my research.

### ***Establishing basic elements of the official narrative under US Occupation (1945-1952)***

While my formal analysis of the Japanese narrative begins in 1952, when the US occupation of Japan formally ended and Japan regained its sovereignty, I first review the key elements of the official narrative that were established during the US Occupation of Japan, which lasted from Japan's official surrender in September 1945 until the coming into force of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in April 1952. In particular, key elements of the official narrative were advanced in decisions made by the United States in its occupation of Japan, both before and after the 'reverse course'; via testimonies and evidence presented over the two-year span (1946-8) of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, which is often referred to as the Tokyo Trial; and in the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which was signed between Japan and the Allied Powers in September 1951. And while the arguments advanced in this dissertation *do not* apply to the political factors that influence the initial establishment of a state's official narrative, I review this formative period in order to compare subsequent changes in the narrative against its initial formulation, and to provide the context with which to better understanding the origins of crucial elements of the narrative.

### ***Mixed signals from Japanese officials in the wake of surrender***

In the several months that followed the Emperor's radio broadcast announcing Japan's surrender (which did not actually use the word 'surrender') on 15 August 1945 (Barnard 2003: 124-6), initial and conflicting efforts to begin to come to terms with the devastation, enormity and atrocities of the war began to emerge. Before the US Occupation authorities even arrived in Japan, government officials began to black out militarist phrases and passages in school textbooks (Beauchamp and Vardaman 1994: 59), where they had previously been ubiquitous (Murdo 1996). In addition, the Yasukuni Shrine museum (the Yushukan), which had honored the Japanese Imperial army and its soldiers (Jeans 2005: 151), was closed, although the shrine itself was not. Moreover, Japanese officials, especially in the various branches of the military, apparently destroyed many potentially incriminating documents in the short period before US officials arrived to begin the occupation of Japan (Bryne 2007; *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 2007). And yet, in addition to these seeming attempts to cover up parts of the recent past, "a parliamentary resolution was passed four months after surrender that acknowledged Japanese responsibility" for the war (Field 1995: 408).

More importantly, in this period key myths about the nature of and Japan's responsibility for the war began to take shape, including: the neglect of Asian victims in the official and popular narratives of the war that emerged; the emphasis on Japanese victimhood, both at the hands of the 'clique of militarists' who led the army and the country into the war, and as a result of the US and Allied fire bombing and destruction of many Japanese cities and especially in the US' devastating atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; and the policy of protecting the Emperor from bearing any responsibility for the outcome of or policies in the war. Notably, only 14 days after the Emperor's radio broadcast, the caretaker Prime Minister, Prince Higashikuni, called on the Japanese people to together 'repent' for their collective 'sins' that were responsible

for the military's defeat in the war. This is referred to as “the repentance of the one hundred million” (Kersten 2004: 499). This call implied that the people, *not* the Emperor, were ultimately responsible for the war (Seraphim 2006: 1; Wakamiya 1998: 102-3). More explicitly along this line, in early November the Japanese Cabinet issued an official statement that explicitly justified the Emperor's actions in starting and conducting the war, and disavowed his personal responsibility for the war (He 2009: 125-6). Likewise, in a sign of the narrow understanding of ‘war responsibility’ that Japanese officials were developing, “In 1951, the Japanese foreign ministry made a secret report analyzing why Japanese foreign policy had made such serious mistakes. It only reviewed war responsibility from the perspective of Japanese diplomacy during the war” (Tennichi 2007: 50).

### *The Tokyo Trial*

The Tokyo Trial lasted from 1946 to 1948, at the end of which 25 defendants were convicted, of whom seven were sentenced to death (Dower 1999: 452). At its end, “the Tribunal concluded that there was, in Japanese policy, a criminal conspiracy to wage wars of aggression and that the Japanese military had perpetrated serious war crimes against Allied POWs and civilians in China” (Futamura 2006: 473). Crucially, the Nanjing Massacre was one of the few massacres or atrocities for which defendants were prosecuted at the Trial, which was for many Japanese the first time they learned about the massacre (Nozaki 2008: 52). During the trial the prosecutors framed the Nanjing Massacre as being representative of and a stand-in for the much larger set of crimes against humanity that the Japanese army was alleged to have committed in the war (Brook 2001: 677). Among the 25 defendants who were convicted, two were found guilty (and hanged) for their involvement in the Nanjing Massacre (Rose 2005: 35; Brook 2001: 677). Moreover, YOSHIDA Takashi notes that the court's findings regarding the Nanjing Massacre, “that Japanese soldiers killed 200,000 civilians and prisoners of war in six weeks of the occupation and that approximately 20,000 cases of rape occurred during the first month of the occupation .... set in place the standard understanding of the event in Japanese postwar historiography” (2006b: 51). In addition, the Tokyo Trial established another element of the official narrative, that only a small group of military (and a few civilian) leaders was responsible for the debacle of the war, and that the emperor did not bear responsibility (Nozaki 2008: 7; Benfell 2002). Finally, the fact that the tribunal for the most part overlooked crimes against Asian victims and nations (Nozaki 2008: 7), contributed to the later tendency to neglect non-Japanese victims of the war in Japanese official and popular narratives (Rose 2005: 35, 36).

### *US Occupation policies*

In addition to the proceedings of the Tokyo Trial and the Class B and C war crimes trials that were held in various countries between 1945 and 1951 (Yoshida 2006b: 64; Seraphim 2006: 6),<sup>484</sup> information about the Nanjing Massacre was disseminated to the Japanese people by the

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<sup>484</sup> Rose writes that “Military tribunals were held in various cities in China and Taiwan, including Beijing, Nanjing, and Shenyang (formerly Mukden), and Taipei, between 1946 and 1949. According to Chinese statistics, 517 Japanese tried as war criminals, 148 were given the death sentence, 81 life sentences, 229 fixed sentences and 59 were acquitted (Tian 2002: 64-5). These figures are low when compared with convictions made in trials held by the British or the Dutch, and the Nationalist government seemed more interested in trying Chinese collaborators than Japanese war criminals” (2005: 36). Moreover, “the Nanjing trial found four men guilty of participating in the Nanjing massacre (Tani Hisao, Mukai Toshiaki, Noda Tsuyoshi and Tanaka Gunkichi)” (Rose 2005: 139, note 8).

Civil Information and Education Section of the US occupation authority. Given that this event had not been covered in the Japanese press during the war, most Japanese people therefore knew little to nothing about it and other atrocities committed by the Japanese army during the war. In response to this situation, this section of the Occupation Authority “was given the task of teaching Japanese citizens ‘the truth’ about the war by revealing Japanese war crimes and highlighting the devastating consequences of the war including Japan’s destruction and defeat” (Tanaka 2006: 4-5). In addition, Nozaki (2002: 8) writes that

“all three [state-authored history textbooks written during the Occupation period] included some descriptions of the Nanjing Massacre of 1937 in the context of Japan’s power diplomacy and ever-extending battle lines. ... *Kuni no Ayumi* [*The Course of the Nation*, which was published in 1946], in its section of modern and contemporary history ... referred to the event as follows: ‘[Our army] ravaged Nanjing, the capital of the Republic of China . . . .’ The line was brief but clear in signifying that the event was now seen as one of Japan’s wartime wrongdoings. ... *Nihon no Rekishi* [*History of Japan*, which was published in 1946 and was “the textbook for secondary schools”] pointed out Japan’s ‘arrogance’ in waging the ‘war . . . without declaration’ and included the line ‘Our army committed atrocities when capturing Nanjing’ . . . . Also *Nihon Rekishi* [*Japanese History*, which was published in 1947 and was “the textbook for teacher training schools”] stated: ‘The war situation became more and more complicated, and the resistance on the Chinese side grew more intense, triggered by the Japanese Army’s atrocities in Nanjing acting as a trigger.’ These descriptions referring to the Nanjing Massacre were not extensive, and they dealt with the matter somewhat in passing; nonetheless, they represented the view that the event took place in the context of Japan’s aggression, involving atrocities committed by the Japanese Army.”

These passages notwithstanding, the main focus of the Occupation Authority’s policies for revising the educational system was not on making children and the public aware of information related to Japan’s wartime aggression and atrocities. As the US State Department’s 1947 report on the “Revision of the Japanese Educational System” details, the main policy focus was rather on eliminating militarism, “ultranationalism, state Shintoism, veneration of the Emperor, exaltation of the state over the individual, and race superiority” from textbooks and from the educational environment (Beauchamp and Vardaman 1994: 97-100, with quoted passage from p. 98).

As in the Tokyo Trial, a central element of the information that was communicated to the Japanese people emphasized the ‘myth of the military clique,’ according to which the Japanese people – along with other victims of Japanese imperialism, militarism and aggression – were considered to be victims of a small group of military leaders who had recklessly led the nation into war and destruction and who were characterized as bearing responsibility for the destruction and brutality of the war.<sup>485</sup> This myth was bolstered by the fact that the wartime emperor – Hirohito – was allowed by the occupation authorities to continue as emperor and was not held responsible for the war.

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<sup>485</sup> See: Tanaka 2006: 6; Fujitani, White and Yoneyama 2001: 7; Ogawa 2000: 2; Miller 1995; He 2009.

Finally, the writing of the so-called “Peace Constitution” has been intertwined with debates about history issues since the end of the occupation.<sup>486</sup> There are three key aspects of the Constitution that have played a role in debates about Japan’s war legacy in the postwar period. The first is the renunciation of war and the use of force that is famously enshrined in Article 9 of the Constitution. The second is the identification of the Emperor as “the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people” in Article 1, and the decree in Article 4 that the Emperor “shall not have powers related to government,” which has been interpreted to mean that he should not be involved in politics outside of the ceremonial duties prescribed in Article 7 of the Constitution. And finally, the third is the Article 20 proscription on the involvement of the state in religious affairs.<sup>487</sup> Since shortly after Japan regained its sovereignty in 1952, the question of whether and how to revise the Constitution has been discussed by politicians and the public. This debate has been polarized along party lines in Japan, with conservatives from the Liberal and Democratic Parties (which in 1955 became the Liberal Democratic Party) pushing for revisions that would, for example, recognize the Japan Self-Defense Forces as constitutional; and with those from the Socialist Party and others opposed to any revision of the Constitution, and especially of Article 9 and Japan’s Constitutional commitment to pacifism. Moreover, these debates have been tied up with divisions over and attitudes about Japan’s conduct in the war, with those opposed to Constitutional revision fearing that such action could spark a revival of militarism in Japan and/or could be perceived as threatening by Japan’s neighbors (Nishijima 1963: 23-4; Muto 2006).<sup>488</sup> Thus, at various points over the past sixty years, official actions related to Japan’s war legacy have been debated on the grounds of their Constitutionality, including whether the Emperor was legally allowed to ‘apologize’ for Japan’s colonization of South Korea during the Korean President’s first state visit to Japan in 1984 (Wakamiya 1998: 243-4); and whether the Prime Minister was allowed to visit the private, Shinto Yasukuni Shrine in an official capacity, given Article 20 of the Constitution.

### *The Cold War and the ‘reverse course’*

Another factor that later strongly shaped the evolution of these official narratives was the emergence of the Cold War and the ‘reverse course’ in the United States’ policies toward Japan, which can be traced to late 1948. As the Cold War took shape, the US’ foreign policy priorities were dramatically altered, which led to an about-face in its policies toward Japan. Prior to the ‘reverse course,’ the US’ plans were to rehabilitate Japan as a democratic and peace-loving nation by removing all signs of militarism from Japanese politics and society; purging wartime

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<sup>486</sup> US Occupation authorities drafted the Constitution, which passed both houses of the Diet in October 1946 and came into force in May 1947. The full text of the 1947 Constitution is available online, at: <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/1947con.html>.

<sup>487</sup> The abolition of State Shinto on 15 December 1945 (Beauchamp and Vardaman 1994: 70-1) began the process through which the US General “MacArthur dismantled Shrine Shinto’s stronghold in the central bureaucracy, declared Yasukuni Shrine a private religious institution, and then relegated it to the nonpublic sphere under the new constitutional separation of state and religion” (Seraphim 2006: 235).

<sup>488</sup> One interviewee noted that a leftist might say that the pillar of Japan’s national identity is the postwar Constitution, and then further explained that a leftist might say this, because the Constitution is the negation of the Imperial past (Author’s interview with journalist at *Asahi Shimbun* [J-12], Tokyo, July 2008). Another interviewee argued that nationalists and revisionists have the common goal of lessening the (perceived) guilt of the Japanese military in WWII. If they succeed in this (i.e., if the image of the military is rehabilitated), then they can much more easily revise the Constitution to remove Article 9 and remilitarize Japan (Author’s interview with *New York Times* journalist [J-2], Tokyo, July 2008).

leaders, conservatives and nationalists from government and the bureaucracy; and having Japan pay reparations to the countries that had been the victims of its wartime aggression. However, as the Cold War rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union (USSR) solidified, the Communists took full control of the Chinese mainland, and lines between communist and non-communist countries were emerging within Asia, the US reoriented its policies in Japan. Thus,

“[US] policy makers changed from their earlier emphasis on demilitarization and democratization to making Japan into a conservative ally of the American bloc in Asia. ... By 1951, all but a handful of the approximately 200,000 people purged in 1946 for their involvement in the war effort had been released. ... In turn, almost 22,000 communists or suspected communists lost their jobs in the so-called Red Purge, and the government actively censored left-wing publications. At the same time, the police force was reestablished, remilitarization openly discussed, and the bureaucracy restored to its position of power” (Seraphim 2006: 54).

This seismic shift in the priorities of the occupation authorities allowed Japanese conservative politicians, many of whom had been in positions of power during the war years, but who were initially banned from politics in the first couple of years of the occupation, to quickly re-assume positions of power (Dower 1999: 474).<sup>489</sup> As a result, there was and continues to be a striking continuity in political leadership in Japan, which persists to the present (Barnard 2003: 159-60). Numerous analysts refer to the continuities in political leadership as an important source of continuity in official Japanese narratives of WWII.<sup>490</sup> Moreover, these continuities in power are threefold, referring to the Liberal Democratic Party’s hold on power for most of the postwar period; to the striking continuities in the most powerful individuals within the LDP, which has many members who are the second or even third generation in a family to be a Diet member;<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>489</sup> Benfell (2002) notes that “As with the Tokyo Trials, relatively few people were removed from public life (0.29% of the population, in contrast with 2.5% in US-occupied areas of Germany), and many of those were ultimately rehabilitated, even before the end of the occupation.”

<sup>490</sup> This point was made by several interviewees: Author’s interview with political analyst [J-1], Tokyo, July 2008; Author’s interview with *New York Times* journalist [J-2], Tokyo, July 2008; Author’s interview with leftist historian [J-9], Tokyo, July 2008. One of these interviewees argued that, in accounting for the continuities in Japan’s position on its war responsibility, the issue of political continuity is more important than the desire for Japan to be a ‘normal’ nation. See also: Yamamoto 2000: 2; Saaler 2005; Berger 1993: 134-5; Yoshida 2006b: 93; Yang 2001: 57. This is also mentioned with some frequency in news analyses, e.g.: *Straits Times* 2008.

<sup>491</sup> On this point, one interviewee argued that today’s revisionists are often the sons and grandsons of wartime leaders, who were the people that were responsible for the aggression and atrocities, and their positions on history issues can be explained (to a large degree) by the fact that they are protecting the memory of their ancestors (Author’s interview with political analyst [J-1], Tokyo, July 2008). Another interviewee noted that many politicians in Japan are 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or even 4<sup>th</sup> generation politicians. This astounding fact means that for many politicians, these issues are not just academic, but are actually *personal*, since they directly involve the actions of their fathers and grandfathers (Author’s interview with *New York Times* journalist [J-2], Tokyo, July 2008). A third interviewee noted that many incumbent politicians and Diet members in Japan are 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation politicians, and many of these politicians in the core of power are descendants of wartime leaders. Thus, for many 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation politicians, to acknowledge Japan’s war responsibility and conduct is to acknowledge the responsibilities of their own ancestors. Furthermore, this interviewee pointed out that many pre-war politicians were running family businesses, many of which were involved in forced labor and other related criminal offenses in Asia during the war. Thus, if their descendants admit Japan’s responsibility, they would also have to pay compensation, so they want to avoid the financial burden by denying Japan’s responsibilities (Author’s interview with leftist historian [J-9], Tokyo, July 2008).



and to continuities among bureaucratic elites in the postwar period (Seraphim 2006: 317-8). An early example of the first type of continuity in political leadership can be seen in 1954, when “Shigemitsu Mamoru, who was sentenced to seven years’ imprisonment as a Class-A war criminal, became a deputy prime minister and foreign minister under the administration of then Prime Minister Ichiro Hatoyama in 1954” (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 2005, underlining added). Moreover, by 1955, only three years after the end of the occupation, conservatives formed the Liberal Democratic Party, which – until recently – dominated Japanese politics.

Finally, another important change in Occupation policies that followed the ‘reverse course’ was the shift away from the recommendation that Japan should pay reparations to the states that were the victims of its aggressive policies and of atrocities committed by the Japanese army during the war. This change is again traceable in US Occupation Authority policies: in December 1945, the Pauley mission released a report that called for Japan to pay reparations to China (Dower 1999: 82), and the Chinese also demanded financial reparations from Japan (Rose 2005: 41). However, Pauley’s recommendations were officially scrapped in 1949, and in the negotiations for the San Francisco Peace Treaty, the US tried to insist that Japan’s responsibility to pay war reparations should be waived by all of the signatory states (Rose 2005: 42).

*The San Francisco Treaty (officially: The Treaty of Peace with Japan)*

The San Francisco Treaty,<sup>492</sup> which was agreed on by Japan and the Allied Powers in September 1951 and which went into effect in April 1952, confirmed that the Japanese government endorsed the findings of the Tokyo Trial (Benfell 2002), and further established the initial version of the official narrative of the Second Sino-Japanese War. In the treaty,

“The Japanese government did perfunctorily acknowledge its war responsibility described in Article 11: ‘Japan accepts the judgments of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East and of other Allied War Crimes Courts both within and outside Japan, and will carry out the sentences imposed thereby upon Japanese nationals imprisoned in Japan.’ However, the same article also opened the possibility that Japanese B- and C-class war criminals who were tried for crimes against humanity such as war atrocities, and who constituted the great majority of war criminals, would be granted clemency, reduction of sentences or parole if the foreign government that conducted the war crimes tribunal agreed” (Tanaka 2006: 8).

As mentioned above and as a result of pressure from the United States, the treaty also declared that Japan would not have to pay war reparations to the Allied Powers. “Article 14 of the treaty stated that ‘the Allied Powers waive all reparations claims,’ and that Japan’s resources were ‘not presently sufficient’ to pay large sums to cover damages inflicted during the war” (Benfell 2002). The exception to this waiver of war reparations was for those countries that had been colonized by Japan: the treaty stipulated that those states could seek reparations from Japan at a later point through bilateral negotiations.<sup>493</sup> This clause led to Japan’s payment of reparations to

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<sup>492</sup> The full text of the Treaty of Peace with Japan is available online, at: <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/alpha/learn/SanFran.htm>.

<sup>493</sup> This exception resulted in particular from the protestations of the Philippine government. Rose writes that “The Philippine government was the most vocal in its protest, demanding compensation for \$8 billion in damages. It

Burma, the Philippines, Indonesia, and South Vietnam in the late 1950s.<sup>494</sup> Finally, the other key aspect of this Treaty was the notable absence of most of the Asian countries that were colonized and/or victimized by Japan during the war, most of whom were either not invited to participate in the US-led peace negotiations and treaty or refused to because of the unacceptable terms of the treaty upon which the US was insisting (Tanaka 2006).

*Key narratives, policies and actors that emerged from the Occupation*

Thus, as Japan emerged from the Occupation, several key myths about and narrative strands related to World War II, the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Nanjing Massacre had already emerged. The most important among these were: that responsibility for Japan's defeat in the war lay with a small group of military leaders and civilians (He 2009: 125-6), and that the Emperor did not bear any responsibility for Japan's entry into the war, its conduct in the war, or its defeat. In addition, facts about atrocities committed by the Japanese army during the war and in its occupation of Korea and other countries started to reach Japanese citizens during the Occupation, in textbooks, through limited media coverage of these issues,<sup>495</sup> and through prosecutions in the Tokyo Trial and other Allied war crimes trials. However, Asian victims of Japan's actions were largely overlooked in official actions and accounts in this early period.

Moreover, several policies that were enacted during the Occupation had a significant impact on the trajectory of the narrative in the subsequent decades. The most important of these policies were: MacArthur's decision to allow the Emperor to remain in office as a secular, apolitical figurehead; the US' decision to not demand reparations of Japan; the assertion of Japan's pacifism and the renunciation of war; and the empowerment of conservatives, many of whom had been in power during the war, and the purging of leftists from Japanese politics.

Finally, from an institutional perspective, several societal groups formed in this period, which were to subsequently play large roles in the shaping and influencing of the official narrative under scrutiny. In particular, four interest groups formed during the Occupation period, each of which took clear positions on issues related to Japan's wartime actions, and/or on issues that came to be connected with how Japan's wartime legacy was narrated and commemorated.

On the conservative side, two organizations were formed in the late 1940s, each of which assumed a prominent role in the domestic contestation related to aspects of Japan's war memories in the postwar period. In February of 1946, the Association of Shinto Shrines (*Jinja honcho*) was established with the goals of overturning the US-imposed end both of state sponsorship of Shinto shrines and of the Emperor's role as the divine head of the state and as a

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failed to secure this amount, but it did manage to get the inclusion of clause 14 (a) into the treaty which had the effect of relegating reparations to a post-treaty process, limiting claims to states, not nationals (i.e., individuals), and allowing for reparations to be in kind (e.g., through the provision of services), therefore easing the strain on the Japanese economy (Price 2001: 8). Other dissatisfied Asian governments also made their feelings known by refusing to attend the conference (e.g., India and Burma), or ratify the treaty (Indonesia), preferring instead to deal directly with Japan in the 1950s and 1960s (Price 2001)" (2005: 43).

<sup>494</sup> See: Tanaka 2006: 7; Morris-Suzuki 2007: 179-80; Field 1995: 412.

<sup>495</sup> According to Daqing YANG, "A search for references to the Japanese atrocities in Nanjing between 1948 and 1970 in the *Asahi shinbun* table of contents database turns up not a single hit. The result for 1945-1948 was thirteen. See *Asahi shinbun midashi deta besu* (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1995)" (2001: 79).

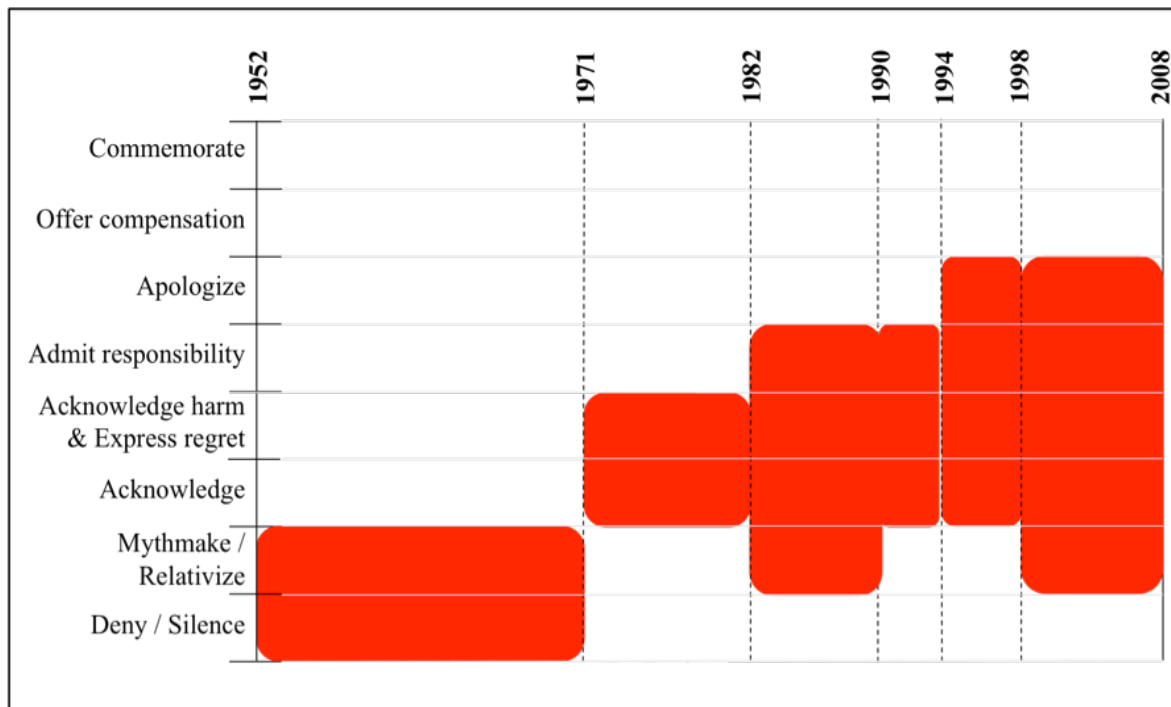
Shinto deity (Seraphim 2006: 37). A year later, in 1947, arguably the most influential and powerful conservative interest group on history issues was formed, initially under the name of the Japan League for the Welfare of the War Bereaved (*Nihon izoku kosei renmei*). Like the Association of Shinto Shrines, this group, which changed its name in 1953 to the Japan Association of War-bereaved Families (*Nihon izokukai*), also supported official worship at the Yasukuni Shrine (Seraphim 2006: 61). Moreover, while the League was initially established to lobby the government for welfare benefits for veterans and the war bereaved (Seraphim 2006; Benfell 2002), the group came to adopt an agenda much more closely and clearly connected with Japan's memories of the war, including lobbying against official apologies for wartime atrocities and against the characterization of Japan's conduct in the war as 'aggressive.' In addition, in contrast to the Association of Shinto Shrines, this group has not merely been an interest group that has lobbied politicians and bureaucrats. Instead, many members of the Japan Association of War-bereaved Families have been Diet members, and several have held high political offices, including the position of Prime Minister and other cabinet offices.

On the progressive side, two groups were formed during the Occupation period, both of which opposed aspects of the official narrative in the postwar period and pushed for greater recognition of and contrition for Japan's wartime actions. In 1947, the Japan Teacher's Union (*Nihon Kyoshokuin Kumiai*, which is abbreviated as *Nikkyoso*) was formed, and over the subsequent five decades, this group fought against the Ministry of Education's control over textbook content and related censorship of representations of the war in school textbooks. Finally, the Japan-China Friendship Association (*Nitchu yuko kyokai*) was formed in October 1950 by a variety of Japanese business and political elites with longstanding ties to China (Seraphim 2006: 110; Yoshida 2006b: 56). From its beginning this group worked to improve and normalize relations with Communist China (i.e., the People's Republic of China), and "it continually insisted on an official acknowledgement of Japanese war atrocities against China as the necessary basis for a rapprochement" (Seraphim 2006: 10).

In the next two chapters, I trace the impact of these groups on the trajectory of the official narrative. In some cases, these groups' activities have strongly reinforced continuities in the official narrative, and constrained state actors' attempts at or considerations of change. In other cases, these groups' activities have put pressures on the official narrative that have led to change at later points in time. At various points in time, one or another of these groups' activities have prompted other groups and individuals to get involved in this issue in order to oppose some of the positions for which they have advocated.

### ***Outlining the trajectory of the official narrative, 1952-2008***

As is depicted in Figure 6.1 (below), I have identified six phases in the trajectory of Japan's official narrative over the period from 1952 through 2008. In this section, I briefly outline the phases of the official narrative that I have identified in my analysis, and which are discussed in detail in the next two chapters.



**Figure 6.1.** Phases in the Japanese narrative, 1952 – 2008

**Phase One** of the official narrative, which lasted from 1952 through 1971, was characterized by silencing, mythmaking about and relativizing of the events, and therefore covered the first two points along the continuum shown above. There was a broad silence and lack of acknowledgment of the events, with little coverage in textbooks, especially in the 1950s and early 1960s. Also in this phase, official statements, commemorations and other acts related to remembering or dealing with the war focused on Japanese victims and victimhood.

**Phase Two** of the narrative began in 1972, as Japan was in the process of re-establishing diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, and extended through 1981. In this phase, the official narrative shifted two steps to cover the next two points along the continuum: general acknowledgements of the events and the harm suffered in the events, and vague expressions of regret for the outcome. Coverage of the Nanjing Massacre increased in textbooks after 1973, as a result of left-wing activism and a court ruling that resulted from these efforts. In terms of official statements, only limited change occurred in this phase. When Japan and China formally normalized diplomatic relations in September 1972, Japan expressed “deep remorse,” “deep regret” for having caused China “much trouble,” and a statement that Japan was “keenly feeling responsibility” (Field 1995: 413). Also with the normalization of relations between Japan and China, the latter gave up its right to claim war reparations or compensation from Japan. And finally, commemorative actions continued to focus on the Japanese victims of the war.

**Phase Three** began in 1982 and extended through 1989, and in this phase the narrative shifted one step in the direction of apology, with the addition of admitting responsibility, but at the same time also shifted one step in the other direction, with new undercurrents that relativized and/or mythologized the events. Consequently, in this phase the official narrative included four points along the continuum: mythmaking and/or relativizing the events, acknowledging the events,

acknowledging the harm suffered and expressing regret, and admitting responsibility. Overall, the official narrative expressed more remorse and more explicitly identified the events and the victims of the events, although the general tenor of acknowledgement was still vague. This was reflected both in official statements, and in textbook coverage of the events, which increased from 1984 as a result of the outcome of the 1982 textbook controversy. At the same time, however, other official statements and actions communicated a desire to move beyond this history. Thus, during his time in office from 1982 to 1987 Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone regularly declared that it was time for Japan to ‘close the books’ on the past and to ‘settle political accounts,’ and pushed – both rhetorically and with actual policies – to instill more pride in being Japanese.

**Phase Four** of the narrative began in 1990 and extended until 1994. The narrative shifted one step in this phase, no longer mythmaking about and relativizing the events. As a result, the narrative covered three points on the continuum in this phase: acknowledging the events, acknowledging harm and expressing regret, and admitting responsibility. The most notable changes in this phase were that the content of official statements advanced, more strongly acknowledging wrongdoing and explicitly acknowledging a broader set of victims. In addition, non-Japanese victims were acknowledged in an official commemoration for first time in 1993. And finally, textbooks’ coverage of the Nanjing Massacre and other war crimes expanded from about 1992.

**Phase Five** of the narrative began in late June 1994, when MURAYAMA Tomiichi became Prime Minister, and extended until the end of 1998. In this phase, the official narrative shifted one step, adding apologizing and thus comprising four points along the continuum: acknowledging the events, acknowledging harm and expressing regret, admitting responsibility, and apologizing. These changes came in the form of an official apology statement by the Japanese Prime Minister, increased coverage of the Nanjing Massacre and Japan’s war crimes in textbooks, and the explicit acknowledgement of the Nanjing Massacre in official statements.

**Phase Six** of the official narrative began in 1999, and continued through the end of the period of study in 2008. In this phase, the narrative shifted one step to again include ‘mythmaking and/or relativizing’ as part of the narrative. As a result, the narrative covered five points along the continuum in this phase: mythmaking and/or relativizing the events, acknowledging the events, acknowledging harm and expressing regret, admitting responsibility and apologizing. Overall, the official narrative included frequent apologies, some of which went further than Prime Minister Murayama’s 1995 apology, alongside signals that the Japanese government was tiring of the perceived need to repeatedly apologize for its past actions. These contrary signals included decreased coverage of war crimes in Japanese textbooks, especially from 2000; increased resistance to international pressures to express greater contrition for Japan’s past actions; Prime Minister KOIZUMI Junichiro’s annual visits to the highly controversial Yasukuni Shrine; and the opening of the anodyne Showa Hall, which had been originally intended to commemorate the war dead, and ended up attempting to uncontroversially document the lives of ordinary Japanese on the home front during the war. Overall, this phase might be characterized as a denouement of sorts, from the high point of the official narrative in the previous phase.

– Chapter 7 –  
**Contestation, Normalization and Change (1952 – 1989)**

***Introduction***

This chapter traces the changes and continuities in Japan's narrative of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War in the first three phases (1952-1971, 1971-1982, and 1982-1989). Over the course of these thirty-seven years, the narrative shifted from a broad silence and lack of acknowledgment of the events; to a general acknowledgement of the events and the harm suffered, and vague expressions of regret; to admissions of responsibility that were accompanied by undercurrents that were relativizing and/or myth-making. The main drivers of the continuities in this period were domestic and international structural factors, attempts by Japanese leaders to move out of the shadow of the past, and conservative activism that pushed officials to maintain the status quo. In addition, this chapter demonstrates that changes in the narrative arose as a result of progressive domestic activism, the normalization of relations between Japan and China, and pressures from China and other former victim states.

***Phase One (1952 – 1971): Structures, silences and Japanese victimhood***

The first phase of the official narrative lasted from the return of Japan's sovereignty in 1952 to 1971. Phase One was characterized by silencing, mythmaking about and relativizing of the events, and therefore covered the first two points along the continuum shown in Chapter 6 (Figure 6.1). In this phase, there was a broad silence and lack of acknowledgment of the events, with little coverage in textbooks, especially in the 1950s and early 1960s. Symbolic actions by state leaders silenced and minimized the significance of these events, while official statements, commemorations and other acts related to remembering or dealing with the war focused on Japanese victims and victimhood. Likewise, the Japanese government dispensed compensation and support for war victims and their families, but again primarily for *Japanese* victims of the war, especially soldiers and the families of soldiers who were killed in the war.

Structural factors – namely, the Cold War, Japan's lack of diplomatic relations with Communist China, and the one-party rule of the Liberal Democratic Party after 1955 – reinforced continuity and silence in the official narrative. At the same time, interest groups on the left and the right within Japan engaged in political activism over a few issues related to war memories. However, despite the fact that there were pressures for change in different directions, conservative activism (often in cooperation with politicians in the LDP) held more sway in this phase, thereby largely reinforcing the official narrative.

***The domestic and international structural context***

Throughout the Cold War period, Japan's security relationship with the United States was the dominant feature of Japan's foreign policy. Moreover, the influence of the US on Japan's foreign policy meant that the larger ideological struggle of Capitalism versus Communism took precedence over Japan's coming to terms with the recent past and with its WWII victims (*qua*

victims.) This structural arrangement dictated Japan's lack of relations with China, and minimized external pressure on Japan regarding its behavior in WWII. Illustrating the extent to which the US determined Japan's foreign policy orientation in this period, the historian John Dower writes: "the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the [San Francisco] peace treaty unless Japan agreed to sign a parallel treaty with the Nationalist Chinese regime in Taiwan—and, beyond this, to adhere to the rigorous American policy of isolating and economically containing the People's Republic of China" (1999: 552).

In addition to playing a crucial role in determining *which* countries Japan established normal relations with in the 1950s and 1960, and in minimizing the degree to which Japan was expected to deal critically with its past aggression in its foreign relations, Japan's Cold War alliance with the US also influenced the nature and locus of power in Japan's *domestic* politics. The 'reverse course' in US policies in Japan in the latter half of the Occupation period, which was mentioned in Chapter 6, reinstated conservatives in power domestically and supported their hold on power. Finally, domestic politics in Japan divided into two camps within a few years after the end of the Occupation. The so-called "1955 System" took shape, with the broad and conservative Liberal Democratic Party controlling the Diet and thus Japan's domestic politics and foreign relations from the party's formation in 1955 (through the joining of the previously separate Liberal and Democratic Parties) until 1993, and the leftist and pacifist Japan Socialist Party functioning in opposition throughout this period (Samuels 2001). Moreover, partially as a result of these political alignments, the Liberal Democratic Party was able to maintain its hold on power nationally for nearly forty years (from 1955 through 1993). This had dramatic consequences for the trajectory of Japan's official narrative, as will be noted in later sections.

Due to both the structure of the international system and the economic and political disparities between Japan and many of its former victim states in the years after World War II, economic and political *realpolitik* calculations principally governed how Japan dealt with issues regarding war reparations and apologies. Reflecting this, Franziska Seraphim writes that prior to the end of the US Occupation, "the Japanese government ... made clear that it regarded the reparations program as a way to build up East Asian trade and thus aid economic recovery rather than as compensation for the damages it had inflicted on its neighbors during the war" (2006: 114). Trade, recognition and development aid were key in Japan's decisions to issue statements of apology and regret. Highlighting this, the political scientist Jennifer Lind revealingly quotes from a US State Department report written in 1956, which stated: "With an eye to increased trade opportunities in Southeast Asia, Japan intends to make considerable sacrifices to obtain a normalization of relations throughout the area" (2008: 34). Thus, while Japanese Prime Minister KISHI toured *fifteen* Southeast Asian countries in 1957, in part to "make amends for the suffering she [Japan] caused in World War II," the underlying motivation was to restore relations with Japan's neighbors in order to secure Japan's importance within the region and to position Japan as a key determinant of Asia's position in international politics (*JQ* 1958a: 132).

Similarly, *realpolitik* calculations also shaped the behavior of victim states, who often subordinated claims of victimhood to their needs for political recognition by Japan (and the US) and economic aid from and trade with Japan, or used such claims as a means to these material

ends.<sup>496</sup> An exception to such calculations was South Korea's halting of negotiations with Japan in 1953 in response to the so-called 'Kubota comment,' in which the head of the Japanese negotiating team, KUBOTA Kanichiro, told the Korean negotiators that "Japanese rule over Korea was not entirely without positive benefits." This comment so offended the Korean negotiators that negotiations did not resume for more than four years (Wakamiya 1998: 34). Nevertheless, this was an exception to the norm in Japan's postwar negotiations with many of its former victim states in Asia.

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, China's and Japan's Gross Domestic Products (GDPs) were roughly similar, but the two countries' GDPs began to diverge in the late 1960s (Wan 2006: 206), as Japan's "economic miracle" began and its economy grew an average of 10% each year. Throughout the 1950s, the share of Japan's total trade that was conducted with China gradually increased, from 0.5% of Japan's total trade in 1952 to a high of 2.6% in 1956. According to the political scientist Allen Whiting, "By 1956 the People's Republic constituted Japan's number one trade partner in East Asia with nearly 30 percent of its exchange in that region" (1989: 39). In 1959, however, China's trade with Japan precipitously dropped off as a result of the domestic economic crisis that resulted from China's launching of the Great Leap Forward in 1958, falling from 1.8% of Japan's total trade in 1958 to only 0.3% in 1959 (Soeya 1998: 43).<sup>497</sup>

*Independent variables: Domestic contestation and pressure for change*

In this first phase, due to the international structural factors described above, debates over history issues were somewhat limited and were primarily contained within the bounds of Japanese domestic politics. Moreover, from the very beginning, the domestic debate on this issue fell along the dividing line between the left and the right in Japan's domestic political sphere.<sup>498</sup> On the left, domestic debate mainly involved: leftist intellectuals; the left-wing Japan Teacher's Union (*Nikkyoso*) and teachers themselves;<sup>499</sup> some returned veterans of the war in China, who created the Liaison Organization of the Repatriated from China (*Chūgoku Kikansha Renrakukai*) in 1957;<sup>500</sup> the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and the Japan Socialist Party (JSP); the Association for Japan-China Friendship (*Nitchu Yuko Kyokai*), which was founded in 1950; and

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<sup>496</sup> Moreover, one interviewee emphasized that issues in China and South Korea's domestic politics also prevented 'history issues' from coming up in their bilateral relations with Japan. South Korea was under a military regime, and while China had such domestic changes as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution roiling its society (Author's interview with a former senior official of the Japanese Foreign Ministry [J-3], Tokyo, July 2008).

<sup>497</sup> In raw numbers, Japan's trade with China declined from 105 million USD in 1958 to 23 million USD in 1959 (Soeya 1998: 43).

<sup>498</sup> One interviewee explicitly made this point, emphasizing that during the Cold War, the question of history was one of *domestic politics* in Japan. The right wing in Japan continuously made this an issue, and the left-wing in Japan constantly made Japan's facing up to the past (by which they meant not just facing up to the events of WWII, but also to the pre-war regime) a big issue (Author's interview with a former senior official of the Japanese Foreign Ministry [J-3], Tokyo, July 2008). The historian Franziska Seraphim similarly highlights this point, writing that, "For much of the postwar period, the antagonistic relationship between the Ministry of Education and the JTU [*Nikkyoso*] provided the framework for left-driven political conflict over war memories, just as the cozy relationship between the Association of War-bereaved Families and the bureaucracy set the stage for right-driven conflict" (2006: 107).

<sup>499</sup> See: Nozaki and Inokuchi 2000; Nozaki 2005; Aspinall 2006.

<sup>500</sup> Author's interview with leftist activist [J-10], Tokyo, July 2008.



the media.<sup>501</sup> The other side of the debate involved: the Liberal Democratic Party after its founding in 1955; the Japan Association of War-Bereaved Families (*Nihon Izokukai*), which was founded in 1947; right-wing nationalist groups; and several other groups.

In this section, I discuss several loci of activity around history issues that emerged domestically in this period, involving groups on both the left and the right. In most cases, when a group or movement emerged to push for a position vis-à-vis how the past was remembered in a particular domain, its actions usually led to a counter-movement that took the opposite position on the same issue. This push and pull, or back and forth, of domestic activism – wherein an effort by, say, conservative groups, eventually prompts an opposing effort by progressive or liberal groups – characterizes much of the domestic contestation over history issues in postwar Japan. In this first phase, history-related domestic activism was concentrated around issue-areas: the treatment of and public attitudes toward accused and convicted war criminals, the content of and control over textbooks, and official treatment of and worship at the Yasukuni shrine.

### War criminals' parole and rehabilitation

Immediately after the San Francisco Treaty came into effect and Japan regained its sovereignty, a movement began to develop in Japan that advocated lenient treatment and release of imprisoned Japanese war criminals. This movement's arguments were based on claims of "the 'unfairness of the war crimes tribunals' and the 'misery and hardship of the families of war criminals'" (Tanaka 2006: 8), and within a few years, it was successful in effecting a shift in popular opinion, such that the public understanding of those accused of Class A, B and C war crimes shifted from "war criminals" to "war victims," and in some cases, to "war heroes" (Awaya 2006). This popular movement, which was spearheaded both by war criminals themselves and by regular citizens (Awaya 2006), succeeded in gathering the signatures of millions of Japanese citizens on a petition asking the government to parole the imprisoned war criminals, in response to which the Japanese government took action to address the issue. Thus, "in August 1953, the Diet unanimously revised the law so those executed after the [Tokyo] trials were regarded as war casualties. Further revisions in 1954 and 1955 also saw time spent in Allied-controlled prisons as time served performing official duties. As a result, all Class A prisoners still held were released in March 1956, while all Class B and C prisoners were freed in May 1958" (Ho 2005b).

And yet, while this movement for the parole and rehabilitation of war criminals garnered tremendous popular support and was politically successful, it was not the only approach to the issue of Japan's war crimes that emerged in the 1950s. Also in this first decade after the war, an

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<sup>501</sup> One interviewee described the structure of the 'Postwar Responsibility Movement' as very complex. There is no single leading group or influential groups on the left that work on history issues. Instead, there are blocks of different groups gathered around shared generations or political orientations/parties, and these different groups cooperate with each other on specific issues when appropriate. Moreover, there is no headquarters for the movement, and no political party at the core of the movement. As a result, groups are not always aligned with issues or political parties. Some issue areas have close relationships with political parties, such as comfort women and Yasukuni Shrine, but the postwar responsibility movement has a weak relationship to political parties. So they do not necessarily work together as much as groups on other issues (Author's interview with leftist activist [J-10], Tokyo, July 2008).

alliance of organizations, led by the Japan-China Friendship Association, developed to advocate the establishment of diplomatic relations with Communist China and the development of trade and economic contacts with mainland China. As part of this movement, some groups also pushed for Japan and Japanese citizens to remember *Chinese* victims of the war. The first such group, the Committee for Mourning the Dead Chinese Prisoners (*Chugokujin furyo junnansha irei jikko iinkai*), was formed in early 1953 (Yoshida 2006b: 56; Seraphim 2006: 124). In contrast to the war criminals parole movement, which was led in part by war criminals themselves, an organization called the Liaison Society for the Returnees from China (*Chugoku kikansha renrakukai*, which is typically abbreviated as *Chukiren*), was established in 1957 by about 1,000 former Japanese soldiers who had fought in China during the war and who were subsequently imprisoned and re-educated there. This organization was formed to teach Japanese people about the crimes and aggression that Japanese soldiers had committed and to push for the normalization of relations and friendship with China.<sup>502</sup> Yoshida writes that, “just as the members of the group had once believed in Japan’s aggression as a sacred cause and had been ready to give their lives for it, they now staked their lives to acknowledge their wartime crimes” (2006b: 57). From its founding until its dissolution in 2002, this organization of former soldiers actively spoke out about their own experiences and actions during the war, and encouraged the development of friendly relations between China and Japan.<sup>503</sup> Over time, the testimonies of *Chukiren* members have offered evidence of the Japanese military’s WWII-era aggression in China and have contributed to the Japanese public’s support for greater statements and actions that would convey Japan’s contrition for this past to China. Also in the mid-1950s, an activist movement opposing the use of nuclear weapons took shape in Japan. And while these groups were also pacifist and leftist in political orientation, the focus on nuclear weapons – which, of course, made sense, given the national trauma and huge numbers of civilians killed in the US’ 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – meant that Japanese victims, *not* Chinese and other Asian victims, were at the heart of this movement. And 1955 marked the opening of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, which commemorated the atomic bombing of the city and emphasized Japan’s victimhood (Jeans 2005: 8).

### Textbook content and control

In addition to pushing for the revision of the Constitution, in this period conservatives also began to focus on the content of textbooks. In 1955, the first textbook campaign, or ‘offensive,’ was launched by conservatives, both within and outside the LDP, against textbook content that they judged to be biased. As Caroline Rose notes, this and later textbook offensives “were driven largely by groups within the LDP and the Ministry of Education, with some support from right-wing groups such as the national Committee for the Protection of Japan (*Nihon o mamoru kokumin kaigi*), later renamed the Japan Committee (*Nihon kaigi*)” (2005: 55-6). At the heart of their claims of bias were charges that the textbooks’ content was Socialist or Communist propaganda that had been pushed by the influential left-wing Japan Teachers’ Union, and part of the efforts in this campaign focused on reducing negative coverage of Japan’s wartime actions in textbooks. This was partially achieved by further centralizing the Ministry of Education’s control

<sup>502</sup> See: Takahashi, Kaneko and Inokuma 2008; Yoshida 2006b: 56; Rose 2005: 36-7.

<sup>503</sup> As one interviewee described, they have sought to achieve this goal by many different means, including conferences in which ex-soldiers speak, TV exposure, publishing magazines, communication and opinion exchange with young Chinese people (Author’s interview with leftist activist [J-10], Tokyo, July 2008).

over the content of textbook curricula and the approval of textbooks for use in schools (Ho 2005a; Beauchamp and Vardaman 1994: 239). As a result, this campaign succeeded in diminishing critical references to Japan's wartime atrocities in textbooks, largely under the banner of encouraging patriotism and morals in Japanese students.<sup>504</sup>

In response to this conservative campaign for textbooks that were more patriotic, emphasized 'morals' and presented the Emperor in a positive light, and against the Ministry of Education's tightening control over the content and approval of textbooks, a counter-movement led by the leftist Japan Teacher's Union mobilized in the mid- to late- 1950s (Nozaki 2008: 29-31; Yang 2001: 57). Taking action as early as 1955 (*JQ* 1956: 126), *Nikkyoso* opposed revisions that they saw as attempting "to beautify the aggressive war in the past, accentuate the position of the Emperor, glorify the policy of the Government, give weight to people's duties rather than their rights, and regard countries of Asia and Africa as underdeveloped countries" (Beauchamp and Vardaman 1994: 239). These efforts attracted national attention and much broader support from 1965, when the historian IENAGA Saburo launched the first of three lawsuits against the Ministry of Education's textbook approval process. In 1957, Ienaga had written a history textbook called 'A New History of Japan' (*Shin Nihonshi*). Over the several years from its first submission, the Ministry of Education requested many revisions before approving it. When he submitted it for re-approval in 1962, the Ministry of Education requested hundreds of revisions to the text, particularly to descriptions of war-related wrongs, including the Nanjing Massacre (Ho 2005a). Obata writes that "the official reason for rejection was that out of excessive zeal to urge reflection on past historical facts, Ienaga's textbook departed far from the goals of history education, which calls for greater recognition of our ancestors' endeavors, enhancement of our self-awareness as Japanese and fostering a love for the nation" (1970: 96). In response, Ienaga decided to file a lawsuit, because he felt that the Ministry's approval process was a cover for censorship, which he felt was unconstitutional. As a result, his first suit "charged that the textbook certification process was illegal and a violation of four constitutional rights: the freedoms of thought (Article 19) and expression (Article 21), plus academic freedom and the freedom of children to an education (Articles 23 and 26, respectively)" (Murdo 1996). This case marked the beginning of IENAGA Saburo's and his large group of supporters' three-decade-long legal effort to end the Ministry of Education's control over the process of approving textbooks, which was fought in this and two additional legal cases that were filed in 1967 and 1984.

### Yasukuni Shrine worship and treatment by the state

Finally, the third area in which domestic debate arose in relation to history issues in this phase was regarding official support for and worship at the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo. This Shinto shrine, at which the spirits of Japanese soldiers who had been killed while fighting in the name of the Emperor are symbolically interred, had been state funded and controlled until the end of the war. While the Occupation authorities ended the state's support for and ties to the shrine, these

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<sup>504</sup> For example, in a speech made in May 1962, Prime Minister Ikeda declared: "In order to build a superior nation, a nation that will be trusted throughout the world, it is necessary for all of the Japanese people to love their homeland and their nation's culture and history, to attain sound judgment and superior technique, and to cultivate a character that will be respected by people throughout the world" (Beauchamp and Vardaman 1994: 156). And at a press conference in late December 1967, "Education Minister Nadao Hirokichi .... state[d] that in revising the primary and junior high school curricula, now under way, he [wa]s considering embodying the concept of patriotism and national defense as school subjects" (*JQ* 1968: 276-7).

decisions became topics of domestic political contention in the 1950s and 1960s. Two of the conservative groups mentioned above – the Association of Shinto Shrines (*Jinja honcho*) and the Japan League for the Welfare of the War Bereaved (*Nihon izoku kosei renmei*) – lobbied politicians in the Liberal Democratic Party to renew state funding for the shrine, pushed for government officials and the Emperor to worship at the shrine (Seraphim 2006: 9), and worked with bureaucrats in the Ministry of Health and Welfare to identify soldiers who had been killed in the Pacific War and to pass lists with their names to Yasukuni Shrine officials for the enshrinement of their spirits (*kami*) there (Seraphim 2006: 245). Publicly, state support for the shrine became a topic of debate, and “between 1969 and 1974 five attempts were made to put the ‘Yasukuni Shrine Protection Bill’ through the Diet, but it was defeated by the opposition parties on each occasion” (Rose 2005: 149). Moreover, in 1959 the Ministry of Health and Welfare began giving the names of Class B and C war criminals to Yasukuni Shrine officials for their enshrinement (Whiting 1989: 53), and in 1966 a list of fourteen Class A war criminals was sent to shrine officials. Interestingly, it was reported several years ago that “many former military officers worked in the war victims’ relief bureau” within the Ministry of Health and Welfare at this time, which is an indication of one of the ways in which the reverse course and related *de*-purging of wartime officials had an impact on the states’ postwar policies toward the war (*Japan Today* 2003). Nevertheless, the Class A war criminals’ spirits were not enshrined at Yasukuni until late 1978, following a change of the head priest at the shrine.<sup>505</sup>

### Intellectual and public debate

Finally, in the 1950s and 60s, Japan’s war responsibility was discussed in small circles of leftist intellectuals (Seraphim 2006: 21, 25; Rose 2005: 38), but only a few books discussed the Japanese military’s crimes in Nanjing. Moreover, in general, the issue of the Nanjing Massacre was rarely addressed in the domestic media in this phase.<sup>506</sup>

### *The dependent variable*

In this phase, there was a broad silence and lack of acknowledgment of the events, with little coverage in textbooks, especially in the 1950s and early 1960s. According to “an editor at major textbook publisher Jikkyo Shuppan, .... from the 1950s until the early 1970s, high-school textbooks referred briefly to a war between Japan and the United States, but gave students no hint that Japan had invaded neighbouring countries” (Smith 1994). This was due mainly to the fact that the Ministry of Education could, to a significant degree, determine how much was said

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<sup>505</sup> “The head priest at the time was Tsukuba Fujimaro, a former member of the Yamashina branch of the imperial family. During the twelve years Tsukuba was head priest, the Class-A war criminals were not included at Yasukuni. It was said that Yasukuni Shrine backed off because the shrine officials wanted to pass a bill in the Diet for its maintenance by the state. They wanted to avoid measures that could stimulate negative public opinion, such as memorializing Class-A war criminals. It was also said that consideration was given to the feelings of the imperial family as well as the Imperial Household Agency. However, after Tsukuba died suddenly, he was succeeded as head priest by Matsudaira Nagayoshi. Matsudaira was a former Imperial Japanese Navy lieutenant commander who totally rejected the verdict of the Tokyo war crimes trial. Soon after he became head priest, Matsudaira worked to have the Class-A war criminals memorialized and achieved that goal in 1978. But the Showa Emperor wouldn’t visit Yasukuni after that” (*Japan Today* 2003, underlining added).

<sup>506</sup> According to the research of the historian Daqing YANG, “The country’s leading liberal daily newspaper, *Asahi shinbun*, hardly ever mentioned the 1937 event throughout the 1950s and 1960s” (2001: 51).

about the past war in textbooks, due to its authority to approve all textbooks for use in primary and secondary schools, which was formalized in 1953 (Murdo 1996). Nozaki's "survey of fifteen junior high school textbooks on Japanese history published in the early 1950s" highlights this trend. She explains:

"several textbooks ... included descriptions of the Nanjing Massacre of 1937. *Gendai Nihon no Naritachi* (The Formation of Contemporary Japan), a high school textbook published in 1952, contained the line, 'The Japanese Army's wars of pillaging and assault, including 'the violent incident of Nanjing,' brought it worldwide notoriety.' *Gendai Sekai no Naritachi* (The Formation of Contemporary World), another high school text published in 1952, read: 'The occupation of Nanjing resounded throughout the world because of the notoriety of 'the violent incident of Nanjing,' so called because of the Japanese Army's destruction of the city, its pillaging, and its assaults.' Another text, *Chugaku Shakai* (Junior High School Social Studies), published in 1954, provided even more details of the massacre: 'As the war spread, the [Japanese] army occupied northern China within the year and captured Nanjing. At the time [of capturing Nanjing], the army, entering the fortress Nanjing in triumph, inflicted severe acts of violence on the civilians. Because of this, the people of the world increasingly denounced Japan and sympathized with China'" (2008: 14-5).

In these passages, the massacre is mentioned, but none mentions the numbers of people killed or other aspects of the event. Moreover, despite this early (albeit limited) coverage of the event in textbooks, as the Ministry of Education's [MOE's] control over the textbook screening process tightened and conservative and nationalist voices gained in power over the course of the 1950s, coverage of Japan's wartime actions decreased. "For example, in the 1955-56 textbook screening, the MOE commented: 'Do not write bad things about Japan in [describing] the Pacific War. Even though they are facts, represent them in romantic [language]'" (Nozaki 2008: 21).

Symbolic actions by state leaders also silenced and minimized the significance of these events. For example, the purge on wartime leaders and officers was lifted in 1952, and many leftists were purged from politics in the so-called 'Red Purge' in 1950. This reversal contributed to conservatives' ability to consolidate power nationally in 1955, and influenced the content of the official narrative, especially as leftists were replaced with conservative administrators in bureaucracies such as the Ministry of Education (Nozaki 2008: 17). Moreover, by 1958 all remaining Japanese war criminals had been "released from prison and politically rehabilitated" (Tanaka 2006: 8), including Class A war criminals.<sup>507</sup> One of those Class A war criminals, KISHI Nobusuke, went on to become Foreign Minister and then Prime Minister in 1957, in addition to others who held cabinet positions. For example, former Class A war criminal SHIGEMITSU Mamoru became Foreign Minister in 1954 (Ogawa 2000: 2), and another former Class A war criminal, KAYA Okinori, became Justice Minister in 1960 (*The Yomiuri Shimbun* 2005). Finally, in a further step toward rehabilitating the memory of these war criminals, in 1966 the Ministry of Health and Welfare sent the names of 14 Class A war criminals to the Yasukuni Shrine (Whiting 1989: 53), to have their spirits enshrined with those of the other fallen Japanese soldiers whose spirits the state had been enshrining there since the Meiji period.

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<sup>507</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 6, Class A war criminals were individuals who were accused by the Allies during the Occupation of having committed crimes against peace and humanity.

Consistent with a lacuna that emerged during the Occupation period, official statements, commemorations and other acts related to remembering or dealing with the war focused on Japanese victims and victimhood. In terms of commemorations, the annual August 15<sup>th</sup> ‘National Memorial Service for the War Dead’ was established in 1963. This service, which was created after pressure from *Nihon Izokukai* for the establishment of an annual ceremony that would “‘publicly recognize their dead relatives’ wartime service to the state” (Rose 2005: 109), “is dedicated ‘to the war dead (soldiers; civilian employee families; those who died an unnatural death outside Japan; those killed by warfare in Japan; others) in the wars following the China Incident’” (Wakamiya 1998: 254). Notably, until 1993, only Japanese victims were acknowledged at this service (Yoshida 2006b: 132). Moreover, four of the six Prime Ministers paid visits to the Yasukuni Shrine in this period.<sup>508</sup> However, the issue of official visits to Yasukuni did not become a major *international* point of contention in relation to history issues until the next phase. As an indication of this, Emperor Hirohito visited the Yasukuni Shrine six times in this period – in October 1952, December 1954, April 1957, April 1959, October 1965, and October 1969 – and then a final time in 1975, on the thirtieth anniversary of the end of the war (Seraphim 2006: 237). And yet, these visits did not provoke international outcries or protests. Thus, it is most accurate to interpret visits in this period as emphasizing Japanese victimhood and overlooking the victims of Japan’s actions.<sup>509</sup>

Likewise, the Japanese government dispensed compensation and support for war victims and their families, but again primarily for *Japanese* victims of the war, especially soldiers and the families of soldiers who were killed in the war. Several victims’ compensation and support laws were passed in the 1950s, and even more were passed in the 1960s. Among the fourteen victims’ aid laws that were passed in this phase, four were explicitly restricted to Japanese citizens, and the rest were focused on groups that were mostly comprised of Japanese citizens, such as soldiers and their families, and victims of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Seraphim 2006: 80).<sup>510</sup> Moreover, in 1955, the Military Pension Law of 1953 was revised to make convicted war criminals and their families eligible for compensation from the Japanese government as war veterans, also making it possible for war criminals to be enshrined at Yasukuni Shrine (Seraphim 2006: 79). In addition, when the amount of money that the Japanese government has provided as compensation for Japanese victims of the war is compared with the

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<sup>508</sup> Many of these visits occurred during the spring or fall festival. YOSHIDA Shigeru visited 4 times between 1951 and 1954, and also sent a proxy to visit the shrine on his behalf three times during this same period. YOSHIDA’s two successors, HATOYAMA Ichiro and ISHIBASHI Tanzan did not visit the shrine. KISHI Nobusuke paid two visits, in April 1957 and October 1958; IKEDA Hayato visited the shrine five times between 1960 and 1963, and SATO Eisaku visited Yasukuni *eleven* times between 1965 and 1972 (Seraphim 2006: 242).

<sup>509</sup> In addition, as one interviewee emphasized, one aspect of this issue that complicates the problem is that Yasukuni is the only place in Japan where one can honor dead Japanese soldiers (Author’s interview with political analyst [J-1], Tokyo, July 2008.)

<sup>510</sup> Due to the strenuous lobbying of the League (*Nihon Izokukai*’s predecessor organization), “the first postwar piece of legislation concerning Japan’s war victims, the War-injured and War-bereaved Families Support Act ... , went into effect on 30 April 1952. This law regarded the war bereaved explicitly as *victims of war* and constituted the basis on which the government awarded a one-time condolence payment and, beginning in August 1953, annual pensions. ... Aggressive campaigns by leaders of the war bereaved resulted in four revisions to this law (1953, 1955, 1971, and 1974), each of which significantly enlarged eligibility and payments. Additional laws followed, aiding war widows (1963) and war-bereaved parents (1967), and providing special condolence money for bereaved families (1965)” (Seraphim 2006: 78-9).

amount given to foreign victims of Japan's actions in the war, the bias in favor of the former group is evident. The historian TANAKA Hiroshi compared the amount of compensation payments to Japanese victims with the amount of reparations and other payments Japan paid to non-Japanese victims of the war, and he found that "the 40 trillion yen paid out to Japanese for suffering during the war comes to 40 times what Japan has paid in reparations" (1996: 11). And in 2005, the East Asian specialist Caroline Rose updated these numbers, finding that the ratio of payments to Japanese compared to non-Japanese war victims had crept up to about 45 to 1 (2005: 141).

Finally, Japan expressed sorrow, regret and remorse – but *not* 'apology' – to several former victim countries with whom it normalized relations during this period.<sup>511</sup> In 1952, Japan signed a peace treaty with Taiwan, for which the latter received neither reparations nor recognition of its wartime pain and suffering, despite the fact that Taiwan had pushed for reparations in the negotiations leading up to this treaty (Rose 2005: 44-45). Instead, Japan merely expressed "'regret' (*ikan*) for 'unfortunate events' (*fukona jiken*)" (Rose 2005: 101). Due to the divisions of the Cold War and the preferences of Japan's ally the United States, Japan did not establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China until 1972. Yet, in 1958, the Japanese Foreign Minister Fijuyama expressed his opinion that there was "no need for Japan to 'apologize'" to China for its actions during the war (e.g.: *JQ* 1958b: 534).<sup>512</sup> Moreover, in normalizing relations with other former victim states in the 1950s and 1960s, Japan's approach was similar. Japanese diplomats granted formal reparations to four countries: to Burma in 1954, to the Philippines in 1956, to Indonesia in 1958, and to South Vietnam in 1959 (Tanaka 1996: 10).<sup>513</sup> Most other countries, however, formally agreed to give up the right to claim formal compensation from Japan for any suffering that resulted from its actions in the war.

Finally, in 1965, after several failed negotiations, Japan normalized relations with its former colony South Korea, at which point Japan conveyed its "true regret (*makoto ni ikan*), and deep reflection (*fukaku hansei suru*) on the unfortunate period (*fukona kikan*)" (Rose 2005: 101).<sup>514</sup> Japan did not, however, express an apology to South Korea.<sup>515</sup> In addition, Korea also gave up its right to claim reparations from Japan, and in exchange received economic development aid from Japan (Seraphim 2006: 204). Importantly, Yamazaki notes that "the terms 'remorse (*hansei*)' and 'regret (*ikan*)' as well as 'unfortunate past' in these early statements establish the basic vocabulary for apologies that follow" (2006: 34).

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<sup>511</sup> Regarding the distinctions among different terms, Yamazaki explains: "In Japanese, the use of 'native Japanese words' (*yamato kotoba*) rather than the more formal Chinese compounds is a way to effect a more personal and 'homespun' flavor. Thus *kokoro* meaning 'heart' and *owabi* meaning apology sound more personal, the kind of thing one would say in private to close friends, and thus more sincere perhaps, than the more formal words such as *ikan* (regret), *hansei* (remorse/apology), or *shazai* (apology/crime)" (2006: 47).

<sup>512</sup> This opinion was expressed in a Diet committee meeting, in response to a report issued by a Diet member from the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), who had recommended in a report that Japan should 'apologize' to Communist China.

<sup>513</sup> As of 1995, "Japan ha[d] paid a total of \$3.9 billion to the Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar (formerly Burma) and Indonesia" (Watanabe and Walsh 1995).

<sup>514</sup> And on 22 June 1965, the Japanese Foreign Minister SHIINA Etsusabaro stated: "In our two countries' long history there have been unfortunate times (*fokou na jiki*), it is truly regrettable (*makoto ni ikan*) and we are deeply remorseful (*fukaku hansei*)" (Yamazaki 2006: 140).

<sup>515</sup> While South Korea had pushed Japan to issue a true apology, Japanese diplomats refused and came up with this compromise statement expressing deep regret and remorse (Wakamiya 1998: 237-9).

## ***Phase Two (1971 – 1982): Normalization, domestic contestation and regret***

Phase Two of the narrative began in 1971, as Japan was in the process of re-establishing diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (i.e., Communist China), and extended through 1982. In this phase, the official narrative shifted two steps to cover the next two points along the continuum: general acknowledgements of the events and the harm suffered in the events, and vague expressions of regret for the outcome. These changes were driven by domestic activism related to textbooks, which had begun in the previous phase, along with the structural change that resulted from the normalization of relations between Japan and China.

### *The domestic and international structural context*

In the 1970s, structural changes at the international level was an important trigger of some of the changes in this phase. At the beginning of this phase Japan normalized relations with China, and (less significantly for our purposes) downgraded their political relations with Taiwan. In addition, Japan's economy continued to expand rapidly in the 1970s, and following the normalization of relations between Japan and China, their bilateral trade relations continued to grow. Finally, there were two important structural *constants* in this period: Japan remained a close strategic ally of the United States, and the Liberal Democratic Party remained in power domestically.

#### Economic and political relations with China

Japan's trade with China quickly resumed from the drop in the late 1950s, growing from 23 million USD in 1960, to 823 million USD in 1970. While this constituted a growing percentage of Japan's regional trade – representing an increase from 3.7 to 18.3% of Japan's total trade with Northeast Asia<sup>516</sup> – it was a relatively small proportion of Japan's overall level of trade. From China's perspective, the growth in trade with Japan was more significant. China's trade with Japan steadily climbed throughout the 1960s, growing from 48 million USD in 1961 to 823 million USD in 1970 (Soeya 1998: 46). This growth in the level of trade between these two countries stemmed from two bilateral trade arrangements, the so-called "Friendship Trade," which began in 1970, and "LT (Liao-Takasaka) Trade," which started in 1962 and was changed in name to Memorandum Trade in 1968. In contrast and in a sign of the sea change in political relations that was to come, over this same period, Japan's trade with Taiwan slowly decreased in relative terms, declining from 26.1% of Japan's total trade with Northeast Asia in 1960 to 21.2% in 1970 (Soeya 1998: 45).

Thus, while China was gradually become more economically important for Japan relative to Taiwan, two important events also boosted China's political stature. In October 1964, China tested a nuclear weapon, dramatically announcing its entrance into the exclusive club of nuclear states. Then, in November 1970 the UN General Assembly voted to expel Taiwan from its body and to allow the People's Republic of China to take the vacated seat (*JQ* 1971: 122). While the US and Japan opposed this move, they were unable to prevent it. This result was implemented in October 1971, with the passage of Resolution 2758 by the UN General Assembly.

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<sup>516</sup> Here, Northeast Asia comprises China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, North Korea and the Soviet Union (Soeya 1998: 45).



Also in this period, Japanese politicians and diplomats began to think seriously about normalizing relations with China in the late 1960s (e.g., *JQ* 1970: 226; *JQ* 1971: 121), but they held back from doing so because of the US' insistence on maintaining relations with Taiwan (and thus, not with China.) As a result, Japanese leaders and politicians were caught off guard by the revelation of the US National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger's two secret visits to China in 1971, and by the July 1971 announcement that the US President Richard Nixon would visit China in February 1972 to formalize the rapprochement between the two countries (Wakamiya 1998: 125). The "Nixon shock" prompted Japanese politicians to rush to establish normal political relations with China. Japanese officials acted quickly, and in September 1972 China and Japan normalized relations, although they did not sign a formal peace treaty until 1978.

Following normalization in 1972, Sino-Japanese trade increased dramatically. Between 1972 and 1981, Japan's trade with China increased nearly ten-fold, going from 1.1 billion USD in 1972 to 10.39 billion USD in 1981 (Whiting 1989: 95-6). In 1972, Japan's trade with China constituted 17.5% of its trade with this set of countries, whereas by 1981 this share had increased to 26.6% of the total (Soeya 1998: 143). Nevertheless, bilateral trade with China remained a small portion of Japan's total trade in this period, increasing about 2% overall and remaining below 5% until 1985. In contrast, however, this trade constituted a much higher percentage of China's total trade in this period, increasing from just over 15% in 1972 to more than 25% in 1981 (Wan 2006: 54).

In addition to the continued development of trade between the two countries, this phase also marked the beginning of Japan's generous yen loan and grant programs to China. The first yen loan to China was announced in late 1979 and totaled 330.9 billion yen (Wan 2006: 265; Whiting 1989: 122). This was followed by further low-interest yen loan packages and foreign aid grants to China, making it "the single largest recipient" of Official Development Assistance (ODA) from Japan (Roy 2004: 93).

Reflecting this economic relationship, throughout the 1970s the two countries' economies remained highly unequal. Japan's economy continued its tremendous growth in this period, growing an average rate of 5% in the 1970s. Between 1972 and 1981, Japan's GDP grew three-fold, from less than 500 million USD to more than 1 billion USD (Wan 2006: 206). And between 1972 and 1981, Japan's overall trade volume increased from approximately 50 billion USD to about 300 billion USD, thereby increasing six-fold in less than ten years. In contrast, China's overall trade volume increased at a much slower rate than Japan's in this period, remaining below 50 billion USD throughout this phase (Wan 2006: 204). In addition, China's GDP remained much lower than Japan's, holding steadily around 100 million USD throughout the early 1970s, and roughly doubling after 1978 (Wan 2006: 206), after Deng Xiaoping launched economic reforms that began to open China's economy up to the world (Wan 2006: 263).

#### Japan's expanding political horizons

Finally, as Japan's economic stature developed in the 1960s and 1970s, its political horizons also expanded. This was reflected in official statements in this period that discussed Japan's vision of its role as a major international actor, and especially as one that would not only contribute economically but also politically to international affairs. The 'Fukuda Doctrine,' which was announced by Japanese Prime Minister FUKUDA Takeo in August 1977, was a major statement

of Japanese officials' changing perceptions of the country's role in world politics. This doctrine, which was directed toward Southeast Asian countries, declared that Japan would work to develop relations with these countries on the basis of cooperation and friendship, rather than just on economic self-help. As part of this doctrine, Japan reaffirmed its commitment to peace and its rejection of militarism.

*Independent variables: Domestic pressures for change*

While the normalization of relations was an important trigger for changes in Japan's official narrative in this phase, developments at the domestic level played an important role in shaping the content of both public and official discourse about the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War in this phase. The most important of these factors were: the breaking of the domestic media taboo on discussion of the Nanjing Massacre, and the right-wing response to the emergence of media and academic discussion of the event. Also relevant were the increased coverage of the event in Japanese textbooks that resulted from the 1970 Sugimoto ruling in one of IENAGA Saburo's court cases against the Ministry of Education, and the response by nationalist groups and conservative politicians to these so-called 'biased textbooks.'

The media and academia

In the late 1960s, a few Japanese academics began to write about the Nanjing Massacre. These first indications of academic attention to the event were led by the historian HORA Tomio (Nozaki 2008: 52-3),<sup>517</sup> whose 1967 book, *Riddles of Modern Military History*, devoted more than 100 pages to the 'Nanjing Incident.' The historian Daqing YANG writes that, in this book, "Hora systematically examined the Japanese massacre of disarmed Chinese soldiers and other atrocities against Chinese civilians. ... he basically agreed with the Chinese figure of 300,000 as close to the actual number [of Chinese killed in the massacre]. In conclusion, he held high-ranking Japanese officers to be responsible for the massacre and charged that the entire Japanese military system was to blame for the atrocities against civilians" (1990: 18). However, the historian Bob Tadashi WAKABAYASHI writes that Hora's pioneering step "did not provoke a debate or inspire more research" (2007: 119).

A few years later, in response to the thawing relations between China and Japan, the prominent Japanese journalist HONDA Katsuichi traveled to China in the summer of 1971 to investigate Japanese atrocities and war crimes that had been committed during the Second Sino-Japanese War, including during the Nanjing Massacre (Honda 1999: 293-4). In China, Honda interviewed many Chinese people who had experiences of Japan's invasion of the mainland during the war, including survivors of the Nanjing Massacre and other atrocities. Based on these interviews and on his observations on and evidence gathered during this trip, Honda wrote a series of news articles published in late 1971 under the title "A Journey/Travels in China" (*Chugoku no Tabi*) in

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<sup>517</sup> In a 2000 article, Alvin D. Coox reported the results of a search for Japanese-language nonfiction publications that "covered the event at Nanking in substantive detail," writing: "in July 1998, I conducted a thorough computer search in Tokyo, which turned up no less than 55 titles in print—one dated 1959, one 1967, six from the 1970s, 23 from the 1980s, and 24 from the 1990s" (Coox 2008: 89). The book from 1967 was most likely Hora's, meaning that according to Coox's simple search, prior to the publication of Hora's book there had been only one other non-fiction publication that significantly covered the Nanjing Massacre.

the *Asahi Shimbun*, which is the major, left-of-center national newspaper in Japan.<sup>518</sup> This series broke the taboo that had prevailed until this time on discussion of this issue in the Japanese media and even among the broader public. Two interviewees emphasized that Honda's series resurrected the issue of the Nanjing Massacre in Japan, and was a turning point in domestic debates over history issues.<sup>519</sup> The response to Honda's articles was tremendous, eliciting overwhelmingly positive responses from readers,<sup>520</sup> sparking widespread discussion about Japan's conduct during the war in China, and prompting other commentators and researchers to look into the issue of the Nanjing Massacre and other events. Importantly, "a wide spectrum of views was ventilated in the Japanese press and in academic journals. At one end were denialists, but at the other end appeared some of the most conscientious, balanced, and searching studies of the Sino-Japanese War" (Boyle 2001: 149).

The newspaper articles, journal articles and later books that resulted from this investigative trip in turn prompted a vigorous response from a small group of conservative writers, as well as from extreme right-wing nationalists, who were also concerned by the statement of acknowledgement and regret that Japan made to China in the 1972 joint communiqué. Their response to this concentration of events focused on the Nanjing Massacre, and led to a back-and-forth debate over the details and factuality of the event between a small group of engaged intellectuals on the left and on the right, and gradually expanded the public's interest in and knowledge of the event (Yoshida 2006b: 87). "As early as 1972, they ["right-wing intellectuals and writers"] began to openly deny the Nanjing Massacre by disseminating a theory that characterized the Nanjing Massacre as an illusion" (Nozaki 2008: 54). And from 1971 through 1975, Honda and HORA Tomio together engaged in a debate with these right-wing writers – led by the journalist SUZUKI Akira – over the "100-man killing contest" that had supposedly taken place between two Japanese soldiers during the Japanese army's advance toward Nanjing in 1937. As part of and in response to this debate, Hora also started to publish many primary documents about the Nanjing Massacre from 1973 (Wakabayashi 2007a: 143). And beyond the refutation of Suzuki's claim that the Nanjing Massacre was an illusion, this debate and other events in this period led to a shift in Japanese popular consciousness from identifying Japan's role in the war as a 'victimized' party to that of a 'victimizer' (Yoshida 2006b: 88; Wakabayashi 2007a: 117).

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<sup>518</sup> The series had four parts: "Part I detailed the Pingdingshan Incident of August 16, 1932, in which Japanese troops, responding in anger to the resistance of Chinese guerrilla forces, destroyed an entire village and killed as many as 3,000 residents. Part II described *manninko*, a dumping ground where thousands...of Chinese forced laborers lay buried. In Part III, Honda recounted stories of the Nanjing Massacre. In Part IV, he examined the Three-Alls Operation (burn all, kill all, loot all), which the Japanese army conducted from the early 1940s as a means of coping with Communist guerrilla forces" (Yoshida 2006b: 82). For many of the articles, see: Honda 1999.

<sup>519</sup> Author's interview with conservative historian [J-17], Tokyo, July 2008; Author's interview with journalist at *Yomiuri Shimbun* [J-11], Tokyo, July 2008. The latter argued that a big turning point in the domestic debate over history issues occurred in 1971, when HONDA Katsuichi went to China and interviewed Chinese people about the war. Honda also interviewed Japanese soldiers who had fought in China and knew about some of the events firsthand. This had a very big impact on Japanese people, because many did not know very much about the war in China and the things that Honda wrote. Another interviewee noted that, because of HONDA Katsuichi and *Asahi*, Nanjing has always been at the center of the debate over war memory in Japan (Author's interview with academic [J-13], Tokyo, July 2008).

<sup>520</sup> Among reader responses to the articles, "Approximately 95 percent ... were positive, expressing the view that Japan had made a huge mistake, and that the nation must admit it as fact" (Nozaki 2008: 53).

## Continuing battles over textbooks and education

In the realm of education, the textbook battles begun in the prior phase continued, particularly within the context of IENAGA Saburo's legal cases against the Ministry of Education. According to one interviewee, Ienaga's textbook trials gradually and indirectly influenced changes in the content of textbook coverage of the war in two manners. First, the trials brought pressure on and scrutiny of the government's textbook approval system (Nozaki 2008: 36-7), which resulted, over time, in a more permissive screening process. This was particularly the case after a 1970 court ruling in the second case that he had filed (in 1967), in which the judge "decided that attempts by Mombusho [the Ministry of Education] to go beyond the correction of typographical and other errors of fact and to deal with the actual content of the textbooks were against the constitution and ordered the screening decisions repealed" (Kwan Weng Kin 1997). Second, the trials inspired other textbook publishers to try to get more critical passages through the screening process, partially because they began to think that they *could*.<sup>521</sup>

In addition, Ienaga's cases brought the public's attention to the Ministry of Education's textbook review and approval process, and over time helped contribute to a national atmosphere that was more conducive to the discussion of history issues. As Nozaki highlights, public support for Ienaga's 'battles' with the Ministry of Education was immediate, and grew tremendously over the thirty-year period from the initiation of his first case in 1965 to the conclusion of the last case in 1997. The major support organization that was formed around his cases was the National League for Support of the School Textbook Screening Suit (*Kyokasho Kentei Soshō o Shiensuru Zenkokurenrakukai*), which was established in October 1965. From its beginning with fewer than 100 members, the organization grew to exceed 1,000 individual members within its first year (Nozaki 2008: 36). By 1971, it had nearly 10,000 individual members (Nozaki 2008: 46), and by the mid-1980s it had more than 20,000 members (Nozaki 2008: 91).<sup>522</sup>

As mentioned above, the 1970 ("Sugimoto") Tokyo District Court ruling in favor of Ienaga in his second case led to greater coverage of WWII-related atrocities, which started to appear in textbooks in 1974. Ironically, however, this increased coverage stimulated a backlash among conservative politicians in the late 1970s, which meant that the educational domain continued to be a battleground between conservative and progressive activists and advocates for war memories. More generally, it also laid part of the groundwork for a nationalist revival in Japanese politics, which was characterized by many of the policies of Prime Minister Nakasone's administration, which began in late 1982. Thus, in 1979 the second textbook offensive was launched, led by conservative politicians in the LDP and with the cooperation of bureaucrats and officials in the Ministry of Education (Nozaki 2008: 72). Politicians within the LDP publicly criticized textbooks, and several LDP publications and Diet committees took up the issue in 1980 (Nozaki 2002: 604-5), and the reform of education was a central piece in the Liberal Democratic Party's platform in 1982. As part of this "'Biased Textbooks Campaign (*Henkō Kyokashō Kyanpein*)'" (He 2009: 211), the Ministry of Education's July 1981 recommendations for high

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<sup>521</sup> Author's interview with leftist textbook activist [J-5], Tokyo, July 2008. See also: Nozaki and Inokuchi 2000: 111; Nozaki 2008: 46.

<sup>522</sup> Nozaki writes that "the NLSTS supported various phases of Ienaga's court challenges, including collecting signatures, holding study meetings, contacting union members, establishing local branches, attending hearings, publishing a periodical newsletter, and planning mass demonstrations" (2008: 36).

school textbooks for the 1983-86 period included the request that textbook writers and publishers: “soften their approach to Japan’s excesses during World War II” (Murdo 1996, quoting from Beer 1984: 271). In the wake of this request,

“passages referring to the acts of the Japanese Forces during the Asia-Pacific War became points of contention between the generally progressive textbook authors on the one hand and, on the other, the Ministry of Education ... and its conservative, for the most part imperialist and right-wing nationalist, textbook examiners. One of the items the MOE with its supporting institutions attempted to erase entirely from textbooks was the representation of the Nanjing Massacre. When its attempt met with resistance on the part of textbook authors and publishers’ staff members, the MOE attempted to represent the massacre as something that had occurred by chance during the ‘chaos’” (Nozaki 2008: 72).

In a reflection of the success of this campaign and increased scrutiny of coverage of this issue by the MOE, passages about the Nanjing Massacre that had passed the 1977 screening process were not approved in the 1981 screening of high school history textbooks.

As had happened in response to the first textbook offensive, however, these attempts to tamp down critical coverage of Japan’s actions in WWII by politicians within the LDP and bureaucrats and officials in the Ministry of Education, prompted further opposition by leftist textbook writers, the Japan Teachers’ Union and others in Japan. In the next phase, these responses on the left – and this back-and-forth of contestation and feedback effects – contributed to slight changes in the official narrative.

#### Additional developments

Finally, two other domestic developments in this phase bear brief mention. First, in 1976, the Society to Honor our War Victims was established. “This umbrella organization of veterans and war-bereaved families formed ... to lobby the government to revive official standing for Yasukuni Shrine” (Kimura 2007: 336). Kimura further writes:

“The political activities of this society are noteworthy in two ways. First, ever since its inception in 1976, the organization has set up prefectural and other local branches with the goal of attaining 2.5 million members. This large a number, it correctly reckons, creates the impression that its appeals to prefectural assemblies enjoy broad grassroots support. Second, many of its component groups boast potent links with conservative Diet members. For example, the Japan War-bereaved Families seeks help from politicians to raise its members’ state pensions, to gain government support for Yasukuni, and to legalize worship there by government officials. In return for those benefits, the Society to Honor Our War Heroes mobilizes its member groups to campaign for and elect those politicians” (2007: 337).

And in 1979, the Japan Association of War-bereaved Families (*Nihon Izokukai*) first proposed to the Ministry of Health and Welfare that the government create a new museum that would honor

the war dead, which, after years of controversy and domestic debate, was opened in 1999 as Showa Hall (Jeans 2005: 4).

### *The dependent variable*

Coverage of the Nanjing Massacre increased in textbooks after 1973, following a 1970 Tokyo District Court decision that criticized the Ministry of Education's screening of textbook coverage of Japan's war crimes. Thus, an editor at a textbook publisher stated that, "'from 1973 onwards, we began including references to the 'Nanjing Incident' in texts submitted to the Education Ministry .... But we couldn't cite numbers or use the word massacre ('diagyakusatsu')'" (Smith 1994). Reflecting this change, among the textbooks that were approved in the 1972-3 screening were several that referred to the event, including a high school history textbook<sup>523</sup> and two junior high social studies textbooks<sup>524</sup> (Nozaki 2008: 63, 64). The references were brief, however, and often relegated the few details that were given to footnotes. By 1975, Yoshida notes that, "although the Nanjing Massacre was absent from elementary school textbooks," about half of the junior high school textbooks mentioned the Nanjing Massacre, including one that "mentioned that forty-two thousand Chinese residents, including women and children, were killed during the Massacre" (2000: 84). Moreover,

"by the late 1970s, some textbooks containing more details about the Nanjing Massacre appeared on the market, updating their content by research in the area. For example, the 1974 edition of *Atarashii Shakai*, a junior high history textbook published by the Tokyo Shoseki, contained a line stating '[The Japanese Army] captured Nanjing, and caused terrible damage to the lives of Chinese people in various places,' whereas the 1978 edition ... was [expanded and] footnoted as follows: 'Immediately after entering the city of Nanjing, the Japanese Army killed and wounded an enormous number of Chinese people, including women, children, and soldiers who were either no longer armed or wearing civilians clothes. For its actions in this incident, [Japan] met with criticism from various foreign countries, which denounced [the incident] as the Nanjing Massacre, but ordinary Japanese were not informed of the facts [of the event]'" (Nozaki 2008: 64).

In terms of official statements, only limited change occurred in this phase, primarily due to the fact that China did not demand an apology or reparations when relations were normalized, which partially stemmed from China's strong desire to normalize relations and increase trade and economic relations with Japan. Interestingly, *before* normalizing relations with China in 1972, both the Japanese foreign minister and the future prime minister publicly stated that prior to normalizing relations with China, Japan should apologize to China for the war. The Japanese Prime Minister Sato stated in 1971 that "Japanese militarism in China has left deep wounds which cannot easily be healed, and I recognize fully what we have done in the past," and Foreign Minister FUKUDA Takeo declared that Japan should 'apologize' to China for sending the

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<sup>523</sup> "The [high school history text-] book referred to the Japanese occupation of Nanjing in its main text, and included a footnote, which read: 'Because at that time a large-scale massacre of civilians took place, the consciousness of Chinese people to resist (Japan) escalated further'" (Nozaki 2008: 63).

<sup>524</sup> One of the junior high social studies textbooks mentioned the Nanjing Massacre in a footnote, "which read: 'At the time [it occupied Nanjing], because there were those [Chinese] who attacked and shot [the Japanese Army] outside the battle lines, the Japanese Army killed 42,000 civilians, including women and children. There were numerous small-scale incidents similar to this'" (Nozaki 2008: 64).

“Japanese army to the mainland and victimiz[ing] the Chinese” (*JQ* 1972a: 113). On 16 December 1971, “Foreign Minister Fukuda Takeo, addressing a committee of the House of Councillors, state[d]: ‘Mutual reliance is a prerequisite for normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the People’s Republic of China. In order to attain this, it is necessary for the Japanese Government to apologize to the Chinese people for what Japan did during the war’” (*JQ* 1972b: 242). A few months later, TANAKA Kakuei, who was then a cabinet minister and would shortly become the prime minister, made the following statement in a Diet Committee meeting: “‘In my opinion, the first precondition for the normalization of diplomatic relations with China is our understanding that Japan caused China enormous trouble and that we truly want to offer an apology from the bottom of our hearts. This belief of mine is now unshakable and will never change in the future’” (Wakamiya 1998: 250).

Yet when Japan and China formally normalized diplomatic relations in September 1972, neither the statements made by Japanese leaders nor the written joint communiqué issued by the two countries included an expression of apology by Japan. Instead, statements in these official communications expressed “deep remorse,” “deep regret” for having caused China “much trouble,” and a statement that Japan was “keenly feeling responsibility” (Field 1995: 413). Thus, Prime Minister Tanaka told Chinese Premier ZHOU Enlai in September 1972: “‘I would like to express my deep remorse for the huge trouble [*meiwaku*] which Japan caused to the Chinese people’” (Wakamiya 1998: 251; Seaton 2007: 88). In addition, the joint communiqué that normalized diplomatic relations between Japan and China noted that “The Japanese side is keenly conscious of the responsibility for the serious damage that Japan caused in the past to the Chinese people through war, and deeply reproaches itself” (Yamazaki 2006: 140).

Meanwhile, the Emperor Hirohito also issued some vague statements about the war in this period. While the statements did not advance the official language used to address the past, the fact that the Emperor made some statements to foreign leaders expressing degrees of dissatisfaction for the war was new. Notable for its target (the Chinese leader) and for its utterly vague content was Emperor Hirohito’s statement to the visiting Chinese Premier DENG Xiaoping in 1978, in which the Emperor declared: “At one time, there were unfortunate events” (Yamazaki 2006: 141).

Also with the normalization of relations between Japan and China, the latter gave up its right to claim war reparations from Japan. This concession was not a surprise, however, as China had decided sometime in the early 1960s that it would not press for reparations from Japan, and this decision had been ‘leaked’ to Japan and the Japanese press in 1965 (Rose 2005: 46).<sup>525</sup> Interestingly, the Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka was reportedly prepared to pay reparations up

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<sup>525</sup> Wan reveals that, “though war reparations would have constituted a physical form of remedy for Japanese wrongs, the Chinese leadership discussed them in the early 1960s and decided to voluntarily give them up for three reasons: (1) to express friendly intentions to Japanese people; (2) to avoid a repeat of the situation like that in which the Nazis came to power in Germany partly due to the economic difficulties resulting from huge reparations; and (3) because some governments, including Taiwan, had already given them up. Mao and Zhou explained China’s decision not to demand reparations on the ground that the Japanese people, who had also suffered from the acts of Japanese militarists, should not be burdened with reparations and that China wanted to have friendly relations with them” (2006: 88). Moreover, Whiting notes that “Chiang Kai-shek forswore reparations in 1951 and, in doing so, virtually excluded this option when Zhou [Enlai] sought Japan’s transfer of recognition from Taiwan [in 1971/2]” (1989: 123).

to \$10 million at the time of normalization, but he did not do so because the Chinese did not demand reparations, and because Japanese politicians and bureaucrats were not agreed on the need to pay reparations to China (Wan 2006: 88, 379). Thus, Japan did not pay any reparations to China, although in 1979, as mentioned above, it began extending low-interest yen loans and granting Official Development Aid to China, which has since been interpreted as being partially in lieu of reparations. On this point, Allen Whiting has observed that Japan's official economic policies toward China have been motivated in part by "a genuine desire to help China develop, regardless of risk .... In ... interviews, Japanese officials asserted, 'We owe it to China. We must help after all the damage we did to them'" (1989: 123). On the other hand, the political scientist Ming WAN points out that "Japan's ODA has [also] served Tokyo's economic and commercial interests, such as securing energy supplies and trade expansion. ODA has also been a principal instrument for Japan in managing its relations with China, as an implicit but well-understood compensation for past aggression against China, as damage control to minimize the fallout from disputes, and as leverage on Beijing" (2006: 264).

Over the longer term, the agreements that marked the normalization of relations with South Korea and China strongly reinforced the dominant aspects of the official narrative, notably the myth that responsibility for the war was held by a small group of militarists, and therefore that Japan was absolved from the responsibility of paying reparations to either country. Benfell (2002) writes that "since all three of these treaties [the San Francisco Treaty, the 1965 treaty with South Korea, and the 1972 treaty with China] were signed, the Japanese government has repeatedly referred to their legal precedence in denying the legitimacy of subsequent claims ... for reparations to governments or compensation to individuals." Throughout the postwar period, this point has repeatedly been argued by Japanese officials – in court cases, in international negotiations, and in public and private communications. In so doing, Japanese officials, particularly in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, have been motivated by the fear that agreeing to pay financial compensation or reparations to any individual war victims would undermine their legal defense against such claims, and therefore might quickly snowball into myriad demands for compensation.<sup>526</sup> This parallels the Turkish case, where officials have similar (but stronger) concerns about demands for compensation and territory, and have similarly decided that ceding

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<sup>526</sup> This argument was made by a retired diplomat, who noted that in the mid-1990s, when the Japanese government set up a privately-funded compensation fund for former 'comfort women,' the main reason why the Japanese government did not directly compensate former victims with government money was that it feared that such a step would have undermined the whole legal framework of the postwar settlements Japan had made with many countries, and would have opened the door for individuals and families to make individual claims of the Japanese government (Author's interview with a former senior official of the Japanese Foreign Ministry [J-3], Tokyo, July 2008). In a similar vein, Wan (2006: 319-20) writes: "The Japanese government has consistently fought the private lawsuits filed by Chinese and citizens of other countries. Officials from the Justice Ministry typically do not challenge the facts or make defense in the courts. Rather, they make three arguments. First, the compensation lawsuits have exceeded the twenty-year statute of limitations according to Japan's Civil Code. Second, individuals cannot sue sovereign governments. The Meiji Constitution in force before the war did not require the government to compensate individuals for state actions. Third, the reparation issue has been settled at the San Francisco Peace Conference and in subsequent bilateral treaties with various countries. ... The Japanese government does not want to be held liable for the past. Tokyo also sees the suits as potentially opening a huge can of worms; each victory in court further emboldens other victims to bring suits. The Japanese government can use the intergovernmental treaties as legal cover. The Chinese government and other governments have not treated private compensation suits as a high-priority diplomatic issue, giving Tokyo license to treat the issue less seriously than it would have otherwise."



ground in any significant way would inevitably lead to pressures for compensation and possibly more extensive demands.

On the symbolic front, all five of the Prime Ministers in this period paid visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, meaning that commemorative actions continued to focus on the Japanese victims of the war. In 1975 Japanese Prime Minister MIKI Takeo was the first postwar prime minister to visit Yasukuni Shrine on August 15<sup>th</sup>, which was the anniversary of Japan's surrender and the date on which the war and the victims of the war were commemorated each year (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 2005; Seaton 2007: 52). However, he claimed to have done so as a private citizen (Wakamiya 1998: 170), which thereafter became an important point of distinction in the debate over visits to Yasukuni by Japanese prime ministers. After this first August 15<sup>th</sup> visit, three more Prime Ministerial shrine visits in this phase occurred on the anniversary of the end of the war – by Prime Minister Fukuda in 1978, and by Prime Minister SUZUKI Zenko in 1980 and 1981 (Seraphim 2006: 242-3).

Importantly, in late 1978 the head priest of the Yasukuni Shrine took the bold step of secretly enshrining the spirits of 14 Class A war criminals, which was then publicly revealed early in 1979.<sup>527</sup> Despite the private status of the shrine, this action was the partial result of official actions. In 1966, bureaucrats in the Ministry of Health and Welfare had passed the names of 14 Class A war criminals to Yasukuni Shrine officials, who delayed the enshrinement of those 14 spirits until late 1978. This is particularly interesting given that, “by 1972 the ministry [of Health and Welfare] had decided to cease its involvement [with the enshrining of souls at Yasukuni Shrine] because of controversy over a state patronage bill for the shrine” (Whiting 1989: 53). And while this step did not alter Japanese officials' worship at the shrine – with the notable exception of the Emperor<sup>528</sup> – it provoked criticism from “pacifist and Christian groups” domestically (*JQ* 1979: 434; Seraphim 2006: 226-7) and angered Chinese authorities, who thought that they had had a tacit understanding with Japanese officials that Japan's aggression in the war would be blamed on a small groups of militarist officials.<sup>529</sup> Furthermore this enshrinement is the key factor that has led to the current controversy and acrimony surrounding Japanese officials' visits to the shrine.

Finally, in a five hundred-page book on the Second Sino-Japanese War that was published by the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) in 1975, the Nanjing Massacre was only mentioned in a footnote (Yang 1999: 845). In addition, no new war victims' aid legislation was passed in this period (Seraphim 2006: 80).

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<sup>527</sup> The enshrinement had been secretly done in October 1978, but it only became public in April 1979 (Seaton 2007: 52; *Japan Today* 2003).

<sup>528</sup> The Emperor's last visit to the shrine was on 21 November 1975 (Seraphim 2006: 237).

<sup>529</sup> Author's interview with foreign diplomat [J-4], Tokyo, July 2008.

### *Phase Three (1982 – 1989): “Casting disgrace aside”<sup>530</sup>*

Phase Three began in 1982 and extended through the end of 1989, and in this phase the narrative shifted one step in the direction of apology, with the addition of admitting responsibility, but at the same time also shifted one step in the other direction, with new undercurrents that relativized and/or mythologized the events. As a result, the official narrative included four points along the continuum: mythmaking and/or relativizing the events, acknowledging the events, acknowledging the harm suffered and expressing regret, and admitting responsibility. Overall, the official narrative expressed more remorse and more explicitly identified the events and the victims of the events, although the general tenor of acknowledgement was still vague. This was reflected particularly in textbook coverage of the events, which increased from 1984 as a result of the outcome of the 1982 textbook controversy. The changes in this period resulted from several factors, but were primarily the result of domestic actions and contestation, and attempts by Japanese leaders to ‘normalize’ Japan’s politics by moving out of the shadow of the past.

#### *The domestic and international structural context*

In the 1980s, trade relations between Japan and China continued to develop, and Japan was China’s number one trade partner in this period. On the political front, Japan and China’s diplomatic relations were positive, although several events in this phase complicated the deepening political and economic relationship. And while the rate of growth of Japan’s economy was not as great in the 1980s as compared to the previous two decades, the 1980s marked the apex of Japan’s economic miracle, at which point Japan’s economy was the second largest in the world (following the United States.) Importantly, Japan’s economic stature led to a push by Japanese officials to overcome the constraints of history, and a related attempt to assume a leading role in the international political community that would be commensurate with its economic position.

China’s GDP grew at a higher rate than Japan’s, but its economy was still much smaller in absolute terms throughout this period. In this phase, as the economic reforms that had begun to be introduced by DENG Xiaoping from 1978 continued, China’s GDP grew steadily, and “according to the World Bank ... had an average annual growth rate of 10.3 percent in the period 1980-90” (Wan 2006: 205). In absolute terms, though, China’s economy was dwarfed by Japan’s throughout this period, with its GDP remaining below 500 million USD throughout the 1980s. At the same time, Japan’s GDP nearly tripled, growing from just above 1 billion USD in 1982 to

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<sup>530</sup> This phrase comes from a speech that Prime Minister Nakasone delivered on 27 July 1982 to an audience of LDP members, in which he discussed different views of history, and his belief that Japan must ‘cast disgrace aside’ and move forward into the future. He declared: “‘Before the war, there was the imperial view of history. After Japan’s defeat in the war, the Pacific War view (i.e., the International Military Tribunal for the Far East view) of history came into existence. The Allied powers accused and tried Japan by their law, in the name of civilization, peace, and humanity. History will render the ultimate verdict on that trial. But at the time, there spread throughout Japan a self-torturing belief that our country was to blame for everything. This thinking persists even today. It was fashionable to blame Japan alone and condemn everything prewar. I’m against this. Whatever happens, the state must continue to exist. It is the people who inevitably either bask in glory or are exposed to disgrace, because they are the people. Casting disgrace aside, advancing forward in the pursuit of glory—this is the essence of the nation and of the people. We must look critically at Japan’s actions in the past and establish our country’s identity from this point of view’” (Wakamiya 1998: 171-2).

over 3 billion USD in 1990 (Wan 2006: 206). Again according to World Bank data, this translated to “an average annual growth rate of ... 4.1 percent a year in 1980-90” (Wan 2006: 205).

Likewise, Japan’s and China’s overall volumes of trade both grew in this phase, with China’s trade volume increasing from about 50 billion USD in 1982 to more than 100 billion USD in 1990, while Japan’s trade volume expanded from less than 300 billion USD in 1982 to more than 500 billion USD in 1990 (Wan 2006: 204). Reflecting this growth, Sino-Japanese trade also grew during this phase, spiking at above 20 billion USD in 1985 and then dropping back below this mark in the subsequent five years. Nevertheless, Whiting writes that “Japan was still China’s most important trade partner in 1986, with more than one-fourth of the PRC’s total foreign trade, while China ranked fourth for Japan with only 4.7 percent of its total trade” (1989: 99).

In addition to the deepening trade relations, Japan continued to extend generous yen loans to China, proffering the second yen loan package in 1984 and the third in 1988 (Wan 2006: 14). The second yen loan package covered the period from 1984 through 1990 and totaled 470 billion yen (Wan 2006: 265). In late 1984, a second loan offer was agreed, this time totaling “\$2.4 billion over five years” (Whiting 1989: 122); while the third yen loan package was agreed in 1988, to cover the period from 1990 to 1995 and totaling 810 billion yen (Wan 2006: 265).

Beginning in the 1980s, however, the Chinese leadership started to emphasize Japan’s aggression and war crimes during the Second Sino-Japanese War in Chinese education and in official propaganda, in order to encourage loyalty to the party and Communism and patriotism to the nation (Yoshida 2006b: 102, 105, 110). This policy was devised in response to the fact that economic reforms were increasingly compromising the state’s Communist credentials, and the Communist party leadership perceived the need to somehow preserve the loyalty (or at least the acquiescence) of the Chinese people to the party’s rule. Reflecting this shift, Allen Whiting notes that the Twelfth Party Congress in 1982 marked the emergence of a strategy of ‘aggressive nationalism’ in China (1983: 914), after which “the Chinese government allowed Chinese scholars to study and publicize Japan’s wartime crimes” (Wan 2006: 90). Moreover, according to the historian Rana MITTER, “it was felt that reminding Japan of its wartime record ... was a good way to soften up the Japanese government into giving loans and investment to China at preferential rates, as well as distracting the [Chinese] population from the decline in Marxist ideology at home” (2005). This trend would have an impact in later phases (Wan 2006: 90), but was evident in this phase in the Chinese government’s stronger reactions (compared to previous phases) to the coverage of events in Japanese textbooks (from 1982) and to Nakasone’s official visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in 1985. Also in this phase, Chinese officials began to worry more seriously about the military threat posed by Japan, following the announcement in January 1987 that Japanese defense expenditures would exceed 1% of Japan’s GDP, which had long been the symbolic ceiling on the country’s military budget (Whiting 1989: 9, 134).

On the domestic level in Japan, the death in January 1989 of Emperor Hirohito was significant, although the effects of his death were primarily felt in Phase Four. Hirohito had been in office throughout the entire period of the Second Sino-Japanese War and World War II, and the war had been symbolically waged in his name. The Emperor’s death triggered domestic and international discussion over his responsibility for the war as a whole. Over the course of several

years, this debate gradually led to the breaking of the taboo on the discussion of this issue, which “came to be known as the lifting of the ‘Chrystanemum taboo’” (Seraphim 2006: 274). This discussion and the assumption of the throne of Hirohito’s son Akihito, contributed to changes in the official narrative in subsequent phases.<sup>531</sup> An event that reflected the touchiness of this issue at the time, however, was the response to statements about the Emperor’s war responsibility that were made by the Mayor of Nagasaki MOTOSHIMA Hitoshi a month before the Emperor’s death. In response to a reporter’s question at a press conference in early December 1988, then-mayor Motoshima stated “that Emperor Hirohito of Japan must bear some of the responsibility for the Second World War” (Oberman 1989). This statement was in strong violation of the taboo that then held sway over domestic discussion of the Emperor’s responsibility for the war, and which had prevailed in Japanese society since the Occupation. His statement caused an uproar in Japan, with intense criticism from many on the right of the political spectrum, but also with expressions of support from progressives in Japan (Yoshida 2006b: 130-1). Remarkably, Motoshima was kicked out of the Liberal Democratic Party for these remarks (Oberman 1989). And in a sign of the ever-present threat of right-wing violence, a month later Motoshima was shot in the back by a right-wing extremist who was “angered by his remarks on Hirohito’s war responsibility” (Yoshida 2006b: 131). Fortunately, he survived.

Finally, throughout the 1980s, Japanese officials and politicians – led by Prime Minister Nakasone, who was in office from 1982 to 1987 – explicitly strove to bring Japan’s international political standing to the same level as its economic stature. This effort constituted a distinct attempt to shift Japan’s postwar national identity, from one that was constructed around Japan’s economic ‘miracle,’ to a more ‘normal’ identity that could include pride in aspects of Japan’s history and culture. This required walking a fine line, both domestically and internationally, given the politicization of the past within the former context and the tenuously settled nature of the past in the latter context. Thus, Nakasone reiterated Japan’s commitment to peaceful relations with its neighbors in meetings with other Asian leaders in the spring of 1983, “promise[d] that Japan w[ould] never again resort to war with China as a means of solving bilateral problems” when visiting China in November 1983 (*JQ* 1984a: 117), and similarly declared in a visit to Australia in February 1984 that “Japan will not become a military power that threatens neighboring nations” (*JQ* 1984b: 231). At the same time, Nakasone regularly declared that it was time for Japan to ‘close the books’ on the past and to ‘settle political accounts,’ and pushed to instill more pride in being Japanese and for the “‘reconstruction of a Japanese identity’” (Nozaki 2008: 82). Reflecting this, the *New York Times* wrote that: “Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone has declared that the postwar era of Japanese history is now at an end. Forty years after Japan’s humiliation, a new era, unassociated with that humiliation, must begin. All institutions, especially those imposed upon Japan after its defeat, must now undergo a ‘total re-evaluation.’ Using accountants’ parlance, he asserts that it is time ‘to settle accounts’ and ‘to close the books’” (Reston 1985).

This rhetoric was concretely reflected in domestic attempts at educational reform, and in Japan’s shifting foreign policy. Nakasone’s nationalist policies included explicit support for National Foundation Day celebrations (*JQ* 1983b: 223; *JQ* 1985b: 222), a call for reform of the educational system to embrace ‘moral education’ (Nozaki 2002: 609), and according to the

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<sup>531</sup> Interestingly, Japanese officials decided to give Emperor Akihito and the era of his reign the imperial name of ‘Heisei,’ which means “the attainment of peace at home and abroad, in heaven and on earth” (Seraphim 2006: 272).

historian Kenneth Pyle, “restoring national pride in Japan’s modern history” (1998). Moreover, in October 1983 “The Foreign Ministry release[d] its annual diplomatic blue book, in which it ... [said] Japan should play a greater role in the international community and pursue a more active, independent foreign policy” (*JQ* 1984a: 116). This rhetoric had already begun to develop in the previous phase, when Prime Minister Fukuda and other Japanese officials began to articulate a foreign policy that envisioned a larger *political* role for Japan in the world, which would be commensurate with its dominant economic position. However, this new foreign policy was more fully articulated under Prime Minister Nakasone (Pyle 1998).

*Independent variables: Domestic and international pressures for change*

In June 1982 an international controversy erupted over representations of aspects of Japan’s conduct in World War II in Japanese textbooks. This first textbook controversy significantly intensified the politicization of ‘history issues’ in Japan’s foreign relations and re-galvanized domestic debates over Japan’s war responsibility. Following this controversy, history issues took on greater importance in Japan’s foreign relations and in the context of domestic politics. Equally importantly, a number of domestic groups across the political spectrum in Japan mobilized and began working to shape various aspects of official and popular narratives of WWII, the Second Sino-Japanese War and of the Nanjing Massacre. And at later points in time, some of these domestic non-governmental groups’ activities put new pressure on the official narrative and also led other groups of get involved in debating and shaping the official narrative.

The 1982 Textbook Controversy

In June 1982 the major newspapers in Japan widely reported that the Ministry of Education had changed the guidelines for textbook publishers’ coverage of the Second Sino-Japanese War. While several changes were reported in the domestic coverage of the new textbook guidelines, two changes in particular received the most attention. “The most controversial point in the textbook revision was the change from ‘*shinryaku*’ (invade and plunder) to ‘*shinko*’ (enter and assault), or even to the neutral ‘*shinshutsu*’ (advance into), in the description of pre-1945 Japanese activities on the Asian continent” (Yang 2001: 62). While it was quickly revealed that the most controversial changes were not, in fact, new changes, but were rather guidelines that the Ministry of Education had been encouraging textbook publishers to follow for over a decade (Nozaki 2002: 606), attention to the MOE’s directive and textbook coverage of the war continued to build. In the month following the domestic coverage of these purported changes in textbook guidelines, the issue developed into a regional controversy. China and South Korea officially protested to Japan (Yoshida 2006b: 89), and the Japanese government was lambasted in the Chinese and South Korean presses (Couturier 1982; Reston 1985). And while China and South Korea were the most vocal and persistent in their outcries, they were not the only countries in the region to protest. In addition, Japanese politicians from the opposition protested the reported changes in textbooks (New York Times Editorial Desk 1982), as did the Okinawa prefectural assembly (*JQ* 1983a: 109) and other domestic groups (*JQ* 1983a: 110; Rose 1998: 2).

At first these international protests were dismissed and criticized by Japanese officials as unwarranted interventions in Japan’s internal affairs (Couturier 1982). The Education Minister, in particular, initially refused to address the international and domestic criticisms, remaining

silent on the issue for the first six weeks after the changes were reported in the Japanese press (New York Times Editorial Desk 1982). Reflecting this, the historian Daqing YANG writes that “a member of the government Textbook Examination Council was quoted as calling it ‘unfair to describe the Nanjing Massacre in three to five lines while mentioning Soviet or American atrocities against the Japanese [during the war] in only one line or two.’ The government examiner further suggested that it was blasphemy to the Japanese troops to emphasize their atrocities” (2001: 63).

Within a month, however, the vehemence of protests from China (Oziewicz 1982) and South Korea, and their escalation into street protests in South Korea (Rose 1998: 2), led Prime Minister Suzuki to intervene (New York Times Editorial Desk 1982). As a result, the Chief Cabinet Secretary MIYAZAWA Kiichi issued an official statement on 26 August 1982 that noted Japan’s previous statements acknowledging wrongdoing and regret to both Korea and China, and then declared that “these statements confirm Japan’s remorse and determination ... and [that] this recognition has not changed at all to this day” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1982). Moreover, he observed that “This spirit ... naturally should also be respected in Japan’s school education and textbook authorization” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1982), promising that the textbook guidelines would be revised accordingly. China and South Korea announced on September 9<sup>th</sup> that they accepted this statement and Japan’s signaled commitment to resolve the points of contention, thus officially ending the controversy (*JQ* 1983a: 104; Nozaki 2002: 606). Later that fall, the Ministry of Education introduced what was called the ‘Neighboring Countries Clause,’ which declared that “proposed texts should ‘show the necessary consideration for international understanding and ... harmony in their treatment of the events of modern and contemporary history between [Japan and its] Asian neighbors’” (Jeans 2005: 15). As Nozaki further states, “The MOE also noted that it would not ask authors to replace the term ‘aggression’ with ‘advancement,’ or add phrasing suggesting that the Nanjing Massacre occurred as the result of a moment of chaos. With respect to authors’ references to the number of victims of the Nanjing Massacre, the MOE announced it would only ask authors to provide citations” (2008: 81).

Interestingly, however, while these new guidelines *did* result in changes in the official narrative included in textbooks (as described above), they did not result in immediate changes. In fact, when textbook publishers submitted requests that fall to undo the changes that had been made to please the ministry reviewers in the latest revision process, the ministry rejected the requests. This was because the Ministry of Education did not agree with the statement made by the Chief Cabinet Secretary and was reluctant to allow changes in the approved textbooks or in its own approval procedures (Nozaki 2002: 607-8). As a result, changes in textbook coverage resulting from this new guideline only appeared the following year (i.e., in 1983.)

In this case, the timing of the intervention by the prime minister; Prime Minister Suzuki’s specific references to China’s complaints at the time; and the Chief Cabinet Secretary’s references to friendly relations with and past expressions of remorse and regret to China and South Korea indicate that the significant and persistent victim state pressure drove the changes that resulted from this controversy. And yet, if it had not been for the (inaccurate) domestic media coverage of the changes in textbooks’ discussions of Japan’s actions in the war, or the preceding history of domestic debates over the coverage of the war in Japanese textbooks, the

internationalization of textbook coverage would likely not have occurred – or at least not at this juncture.

Moreover, the official domestic responses in this controversy revealed the distance at that time between the views of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education regarding how history issues should be officially represented and the extent to which Japan should accommodate foreign demands on these issues. Throughout this period of several months, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Education showed dramatically different attitudes on the degree to which foreign views should be accommodated in shaping the representation of history in Japan's education. These gaps played an important role in shaping the timing and nature of the changes that resulted from this controversy. Thus, throughout August, the Foreign Minister SAKURAUCHI Yoshio reportedly "struggled openly" with Education Minister OGAWA Heiji about whether and how the mounting international criticisms of Japanese history textbooks and educational guidelines should be addressed, with Ogawa insisting that this was an "internal affair" and Sakurauchi disagreeing. Sakurauchi's opinion was that "The point ... is whether Japan, in the eyes of the countries concerned, is abiding by responsibility for its past actions as stated in separate postwar joint communiques with China and South Korea" (New York Times Editorial Desk 1982). In contrast, Education Ministry officials were surprised at the vehemence of international protests (New York Times Editorial Desk 1982). When the controversy was finally 'resolved' in late August, it was through the direct intervention of the Prime Minister, at which point Ogawa "described the Sino-Japanese War as an 'act of aggression.'" Interestingly, this statement was the first in which a "cabinet minister ... categorically call[ed] Japan's wartime acts 'aggression' in the Diet" (Wakamiya 1998: 197). Still, despite this statement by Ogawa and the reported 'end' of the controversy, the Education Ministry's refusal to make changes to textbooks that year highlights its officials' reluctance in following the policy announced in the Chief Cabinet Secretary's statement. Moreover, this attitude persisted in the Ministry of Education, despite the changes that began to appear in textbooks in 1983 and 1984. Thus in 1985, a former vice minister of education explained: "'We are in transition, trying to go beyond the psychology of the postwar era .... After the war, we were cut off from the past. We cannot deny history, good or bad. But we have a long history on our back. While we must be aware that the Chinese and Korean people still hold anti-Japanese feelings, we don't want to exaggerate past bad events'" (Reston 1985).

### In the Wake of the Textbook Controversy

The 1982 textbook controversy, and the changes in the official narrative that resulted from the controversy, also led to the formation of several new groups, and motivated other, preexisting groups to focus their efforts on textbook and/or history issues. Importantly, these groups were from both the left and the right sides of the political spectrum.

On the right of the political spectrum, there were several prominent responses to the 1982 textbook controversy and the changes that resulted from it. In the immediate wake of the controversy, a right-wing organization, the National Conference to Defend Japan (*Nihon o Mamoru Kokumin Kaigi*), decided to write a history textbook that would not include as much coverage of wartime aggression and atrocity and would instead cover more positive aspects of Japan's history (Nozaki 2002: 610). This project was launched in response to the textbook

controversy, because members of the National Conference to Defend Japan “were displeased with the outcome of the 1982 dispute” (Shibuichi 2008). While this project was announced in 1982, the resultant textbook – “A New History of Japan” (*Shinpen Nihonshi*) – was submitted to the Ministry of Education for review a few years later, in 1985 (Rose 2005: 128). And in a clear example of feedback effects on the government’s position, this textbook’s tentative approval by the Ministry of Education in the beginning of 1986 prompted the second textbook controversy in June 1986, thus renewing both international and domestic attention to and pressure on the government’s narrative. In this round of controversy, the textbook had strong support from conservative politicians and – crucially – from Prime Minister Nakasone. As a result, despite the fact that “some members of the [MOE’s textbook screening] council felt the ... manuscript was ... ‘distasteful,’ ‘biased,’ and ‘lacking in consideration of neighbouring countries,’” and in spite of vociferous domestic and international protest; “the council passed it, essentially because of political pressure (Prime Minister Nakasone was in favor of the text, though he did not back it publicly)” (Nozaki 2002: 610-1). However, even though the book was approved, the Ministry of Education required an unprecedented number and rounds of revisions to the text. One change that was demanded by the MOE after the book had technically already been reviewed and approved was in the description of the Nanjing Massacre, which was changed from “the ‘so-called Nanjing incident’ .... [to] the ‘so-called Nanjing massacre.’” In addition, “The original text mentioned no numbers [of deaths in the massacre]. Instead, it said, ‘China believes the Japanese military massacred many Chinese civilians. But, in Japan, academic agreement has not been reached on the truth of this incident.’ After three rewrites, the text now omits reference to the academic dispute, and says that Japan was accused internationally of bearing responsibility for the ‘so-called Nanjing massacre’” (Haberman 1986). In the end, the Japanese government made some concessions to international pressure, but did not back away from the preferences of conservative politicians and bureaucrats in the MOE to publish the textbook. Moreover, in notable contrast to the changes in the official position that marked the outcome of the 1982 controversy, this time the Japanese government “stood by the final version without apology” (Whiting 1989: 60).

Another response to the 1982 textbook controversy was from a conservative veterans’ organization in Japan. In late 1983, *Kaikosha*, which is “a fraternal organization for army cadet school graduates” (Yang 1990: 22), asked members to send in personal testimonies and accounts from the Nanjing Massacre, to be published in its monthly magazine. The intention was to disprove claims of atrocities by Japanese soldiers during the taking of Nanjing in 1937. To the surprise of the magazine’s editors, however, many of the approximately one hundred submissions actually “confirmed the existence of the atrocity” (Yang 2001: 65). Instead of selectively publishing accounts that fit the account that the editors had expected, they instead published a variety of accounts over the course of eleven issues. Furthermore, the series ended with a strikingly open statement of recognition and apology by the editor of the magazine. In his statement, he “admitted the fact of illegal killings, and even of massacres,” and concluded with this passage: “As someone affiliated with the former Japanese army, I can only apologize deeply to the Chinese people. I am truly sorry. We did horrible things to you” (Fujiwara 2007). And while this apology itself was a notable outcome, “by publishing primary sources that contain the facts and by admitting the Atrocity’s historicity, the *Kaikosha* conclusively repudiated false claims that the event never took place or was an illusion” (Fujiwara 2007). Moreover, the



eyewitness testimonies gathered and published by *Kaikosha* in this series and in a book that was published in 1989,<sup>532</sup> provided invaluable primary data that has since been used by scholars.

Another right-wing response following the 1982 textbook controversy came in the form of a lawsuit that was filed in 1984 by two prominent veterans (along with five others) who denied that a massacre had occurred when the Japanese army captured Nanjing in 1937 (Laflamme 2006; Yoshida 2006b: 95; Yang 1990: 22). In addition, that same year one of the veterans leading the case, TANAKA Masaaki, published a book, *The Illusion of the Nanjing Massacre*, which was based in part on testimonies of “former participants in the battle of Nanjing” (Yang 1990: 22), and which supported some of the claims made in this lawsuit (Yoshida 2006b: 96). Then a year later, in 1985, Tanaka edited for publication the diary of General MATSUI Iwane, who had been the commander of all Japanese forces in China at the time of the Nanjing Massacre. Shortly thereafter, however, Tanaka was accused of incorrectly translating or changing 900 passages from the diary (Roux 2003; Wakabayashi 2001: 527). According to Kimura, “this infamous incident proved that the Atrocity’s factuality could be denied only by fraudulent means” (2007: 334).

Finally, “in 1985, a committee of the Liberal Democratic Party published the *Summary of the Greater East Asian War* ... , supposedly to end debate about Japan’s war responsibility and war guilt once and for all” (Saaler 2008: 140). This book more or less denied that there were atrocities in the Nanjing Massacre, among other arguments.

Progressive efforts were also initiated in response to the 1982 textbook controversy. In 1982, a group of Japanese students formed a non-profit organization called Peace Boat, “as a creative response to government censorship regarding Japan’s past military aggression in the Asia-Pacific. They [the founding students] chartered a ship to visit neighboring countries with the aim of learning first-hand about the war from those who experienced it and initiating people-to-people exchange.”<sup>533</sup> The first trip took place in September 1983, which was a year after the end of the first textbook controversy. Two other groups were also established in the wake of the controversy, both of which focused on mobilizing progressives who were concerned about and interested in getting involved in activism related to the textbook issue (Nozaki 2008).

And there were also international responses in the wake of the controversy. Most prominently, in response to the controversy (Yang 1999: 858), the Chinese government began to build the Memorial for the Compatriot Victims in the Nanjing Massacre by the Japanese Invading Troops, which is a memorial to the massacre in Nanjing that was completed in time for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war (in 1985). Written in huge numbers on the façade of the memorial building is the number 300,000, which is the official Chinese estimate of the number of Chinese people who were killed in the massacre. This memorial, in particular, has contributed to the shaping of popular Chinese perceptions of the scope and nature of the massacre, and it has committed Chinese actors (and even some others) to this number.<sup>534</sup>

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<sup>532</sup> Fujiwara writes that “the Kaikosha published a semi-official history, the Nankin senshi, plus a collection of primary sources, the Nankin senshi shiryō shu. These two works list 15,760 civilian casualties and 16,000 POWs summarily killed” (2007).

<sup>533</sup> Their website is available here: <http://www.peaceboat.org/english/wtpb/index.html#history>.

<sup>534</sup> For a description and discussion of the memorial, see Eykholt 2000: 34-6.

## The Continuing Domestic Debate

In addition to these direct responses to the controversy, in the couple of years that followed, the debate over Japan's war memory was continued by a group of committed scholars and activists on the left and right, who searched for new evidence to support the positions they argued, published new work, and kept the debate active in the public sphere.

In January 1984, IENAGA Saburo filed his third lawsuit against the Ministry of Education (*JQ* 1984b: 236). This case, which was the last one brought by Ienaga against the Ministry of Education, was self-consciously shaped by his lawyers and academic supporters to 'put history on trial,' by challenging the MOE's resistance to the coverage of eight different historical points in earlier versions of Ienaga's textbook (Nozaki 2008: 85-6). One of the points 'put on trial' in this case was the Nanjing Massacre (Nozaki 2008: 125).<sup>535</sup>

In order to gather and publish academic research that would help Ienaga's case, a group called the Society for the Investigation and Research into the Nanjing Incident (*Nankin Jiken Chosa-kenkyu-kai*, which is known as *Nankin ken*) was formed in early 1984, shortly after the suit was filed.<sup>536</sup> It was founded by academics and a few journalists, who met monthly to discuss the Nanjing Massacre, gather new evidence to refute denials of the massacre, and produce research on the Nanjing Massacre.<sup>537</sup> According to one of *Nankin ken*'s founding members, the initial purpose of the society was to help Ienaga's case by finding and publishing information about the Massacre, as well as histories and analyses of aspects of the Massacre.<sup>538</sup> Over time, this group as a whole and many of its individual members have gathered and discovered new information on aspects of the massacre, written a number of important scholarly works and sources of primary evidence on the massacre, and published English and Chinese primary sources in Japanese (Wakabayashi 2007a: 116).<sup>539</sup> Like the testimonies published and gathered by *Kaikosha*, these publications have influenced academic debate over the Nanjing Massacre, accumulating evidence and testimonies that have made it very difficult to dismiss the event as an 'illusion' or a 'fabrication.'<sup>540</sup> This, in turn, has altered the terms of possible discourse for aspects of the official narrative of the Nanjing Massacre, for example in textbooks. Moreover, one scholar notes that "the society ... also helped launch citizen-led education and redress movements on behalf of Chinese victims" (Kimura 2007: 332). One of the most notable contributions of *Nankin ken* to the debate over the Nanjing Massacre was the discovery of the

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<sup>535</sup> Nozaki explains: "Of the eight [historical points challenged in the suit] ... , six involved wartime issues: the use of the term 'aggression' (*shinryuaku*) to describe the Japanese invasion of China, the description of the Nanjing Massacre, the reference to Japanese soldiers' rape of Chinese women (in Nanjing as well as in northern China), the reference to Unit 731, the reference to Korean resistance against Japanese forces during the Sino-Japanese War, and the description of the Battle of Okinawa" (2008: 125).

<sup>536</sup> While this group was formed not long after the resolution of the 1982 textbook controversy, its genesis was not primarily in response to the controversy, but rather in response to Ienaga's case (Author's interview with leftist historian [J-9], Tokyo, July 2008).

<sup>537</sup> See: Yoshida 2006b: 97; Honda 1999: 291; Nozaki 2008: 89; Yoshida 2000: 89-90.

<sup>538</sup> Author's interview with leftist historian [J-9], Tokyo, July 2008.

<sup>539</sup> For example, HONDA Katsuichi, who was one of the founding members of the research group, writes that, "on two occasions, ... they [*Nankin ken*] dispatched on-site investigative groups to Nanjing, enjoying the full cooperation of the Nanjing Municipal Historical Society. About ten people went on each trip, and their reports were published in the two collections" (1999: 291).

<sup>540</sup> See: Honda 1999: 291; Yoshida 2006b: 137-9; Kimura 2007: 334; Nozaki 2008: 89.

diary of General NAKAJIMA Kesago.<sup>541</sup> Lieutenant General Nakajima commanded the 16<sup>th</sup> Division, which was one of the divisions that took Nanjing in 1937. His diary was made available by his family in 1984. An excerpt from the diary was first published that year in the magazine *History and People* (*Rekishi to Jinbutsu*), and the entire diary was published as a book the next year (Yang 1999: 854; Honda 1999: 194-5). According to Daqing YANG, “This was one of the most significant pieces of evidence of the organized nature of atrocities in Nanjing, recorded by a high-ranking Japanese commander on the scene” (2001: 65). Most notably, Nakajima’s diary confirmed that one of the policies following the invasion of Nanjing was to execute Chinese prisoners of war (Honda 1999: 194; Kimura 2007: 334). The publication of this diary changed the terms of debate, particularly for revisionists on the right, by making it much harder (if not impossible) to deny *all* wrongdoing in the capture of Nanjing.

A second, significant series of publications that year was a 25-part series of articles written by the leftist journalist HONDA Katsuichi, who was one of the founding members of *Nankin ken* and whose series of articles published in 1971 had prompted an earlier, vigorous debate on Japan’s responsibility for and conduct in China. Published in *Asahi*’s weekly journal, this series, which was titled ‘The Road to Nanjing’ (Burgess 1985), “told of more stories of Japanese atrocities between Shanghai and Nanjing” (Yang 1990: 21). Then in the summer of 1986, the *Asahi Shimbun* asked its readers to send in accounts of their experiences during the war. Frank Gibney writes that, “in response to the invitation, ‘Let’s talk about the war,’ *Asahi* received an unprecedented flood of letters—over 4,000—and continued to print selections for more than a year! Some 1200 of the letters were later published as a book, in two volumes” (1999: x). This book, which was called ‘The War’ (*Senso*), added to the growing number of first-hand testimonies and accounts of the war, many of which testified to the commission of war crimes by the Japanese army and its soldiers. Another example of such first-hand testimony of war crimes in this phase was by AZUMA Shiro, who was a veteran of the Japanese Imperial army who had fought in Nanjing. In 1987 he decided to speak out publicly about the crimes that he had committed and witnessed in the Nanjing Massacre, and he published his diary from the time. Azuma’s diary and testimonies received a lot of attention, including in China, and led to a libel case brought by a fellow soldier whose actions were discussed in the diary, which would again bring the issue of the Nanjing Massacre to the attention of the Japanese and Chinese governments (Shi Hua 2000).

Finally, in 1988, the first claim made by individual victims of the Japanese army’s actions in the war was made by 200 Chinese villagers, who sought compensation for their forced labor during the war. This was followed by a case brought a year later, at the end of 1989, by the survivors and families of those Chinese who had been forced to work in terrible conditions for the Kajima Corporation during the war (Wan 2006: 304-5, 306; Rose 2005: 79). While this and later redress cases were brought by individuals against the Japanese government and/or Japanese firms, and did not involve the participation of the Chinese government, the very fact that these claims were made indicates the tacit acquiescence of the Chinese government. As such, these cases should be understood as a partial consequence of the more nationalist approach taken by the Chinese government on history issues in the early 1980s.

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<sup>541</sup> Author’s interview with leftist historian [J-9], Tokyo, July 2008.

### *The dependent variable*

Changes in the different indicators of the dependent variable were mixed in this phase. While textbook coverage of the Nanjing Massacre and Japan's war responsibility expanded and some official statements expressed regret, acknowledgement and responsibility, other official statements and actions communicated a desire to move beyond this history.

In this phase, the coverage of the Nanjing Massacre increased in textbooks, as a result of the MOE's policy concessions in the 1982 textbook controversy. For instance, one textbook editor noted that, "Since the Miyazawa document was issued, it has become permissible to say 'aggression' about Japan and 'advance' about other countries, ... and most textbooks do" (Smith 1994). More generally, many of the textbooks that were published in 1983/84 and most of the textbooks that were published in 1987/88 mentioned the event (Hirano 2009: 204-6; Whiting 1989: 50), although throughout this phase the references were quite brief. Moreover, the MOE began allowing publishers to include specific (and higher) numbers for the death toll in the massacre – some as high as 200,000 – although this was still an issue that the ministry reviewers carefully considered and monitored, and only the most progressive textbook publishers included such figures (Yoshida 2000: 93).<sup>542</sup> Regarding the MOE's point of view, Caroline Rose (2005: 142) writes that in the textbook screening in 1984, "the number of victims of the Rape of Nanjing remained an area of concern to Ministry of Education examiners ... , and textbook writers were asked to provide sources and/or indicate that there is no consensus on the number of victims." Moreover, Ienaga Saburo's third lawsuit further revealed that, in this phase, the Ministry of Education was unwilling to accept descriptions of the event that implied that "Japanese forces carried out a *systematic* killing" (Nozaki 2008: 99, emphasis added), and it would also not approve descriptions that referred to Japanese forces raping Chinese women in the Nanjing Massacre. On the latter point, the MOE contended that "rape in times of war by military officers and soldiers is 'a common, customary practice all over the world since ancient times,' so that 'it is inappropriate to refer only to the rape committed by the Japanese forces, because to do so gives too much emphasis to a specific matter'"; and further argued that "the data determining whether the frequency of that rape was extreme was inconclusive" (Nozaki 2008: 100).<sup>543</sup>

There was little change in the *content* of official statements, but the frequency with which official statements of regret were issued increased in this period, especially in the wake of the textbook controversy in the fall of 1982 (Kim 2008). In late August 1982, in response to intense international criticism of Japan's coverage of the war in textbooks, the Chief Cabinet Secretary MIYAZAWA Kiichi stated: "The Japanese Government and the Japanese people are deeply aware of the fact that acts by our country in the past caused tremendous suffering and damage to the peoples of Asian countries, including the Republic of Korea (ROK) and China, and have followed the path of a pacifist state with remorse and determination that such acts must never be repeated" (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1982). Finally, in early 1989, following the

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<sup>542</sup> Yoshida (2006b: 95) mentions the higher death tolls that appeared in textbooks beginning in 1983, while Nozaki (2002: 608) refers to the increased coverage and higher death toll in textbooks published in 1984, 1985 and 1986.

<sup>543</sup> In addition, of the other WWII-related issues whose coverage Hirano analyzed in this phase, one of the three textbooks analyzed gave a longer explanation of the Tokyo Trials and of the issue of forced labor; and *none* of the textbooks mentioned the issues of the "comfort women," Unit 731, or postwar compensation (2009: 204-6).

death of the Showa Emperor, the then-Prime Minister TAKESHITA Noboru commented that the determination of whether or not the war was one of aggression should be left to historians (Joseph and Sampson 1989),<sup>544</sup> which was an indirect denial of the aggressive nature of the war. Moreover, this statement was in marked contradiction with his statement a year earlier at the resolution of a controversy over a cabinet minister's revisionist statements, when Takeshita had noted that the minister's remarks "were inappropriate and did not conform with the *official* view that Japan was the wartime aggressor" (*Chicago Sun-Times Wires* 1988, emphasis added). However, in response to domestic and international anger over this statement, Takeshita soon retracted, noting that "the 'militaristic aggression' (*gunjishugi ni yoru shinryaku*) of our country cannot be denied" (Seaton 2007: 88).

Another notable feature of this phase was Prime Minister Nakasone's nationalist rhetoric, which in effective elided Japan's dark past. As mentioned above, Nakasone regularly alluded to Japan's need to overcome or settle the past, and this push for a new, broader national orientation was reflected in the domestic policies pursued in this period. Thus, an LDP statement in 1982 declared that "school education should 'cultivate the Japanese spirit and foster national pride'" (He 2007b: 53).<sup>545</sup> In a telling reflection of this goal, a senior official in the Ministry of Education stated in 1985: "'For 30 years, we have criticized ourselves severely. This should pass. There is no need for continuous cleansing now. We must see history from a more neutral point of view'" (Reston 1985). Thus, while coverage of the Nanjing Massacre and some aspects of Japan's wartime behavior was *increasing* in Japanese textbooks, in 1986 the MOE and the Prime Minister's office supported and accepted for publication the revisionist history textbook that was prepared by the right-wing National Conference to Defend Japan. While this attempt by conservatives to increase control over textbooks' content and to reform aspects of Japan's educational system was not new, and should in fact be seen as part of the ongoing public battle within the domain of education in Japan, the accompanying rhetoric related to closing the books on the past and becoming a 'normal' country *was* new.

In a step that symbolically aligned with these statements, Prime Minister Nakasone made an official visit to Yasukuni Shrine on 15 August 1985, which was the fortieth anniversary of the end of the war. Interestingly, this was the *sixth* year in a row that the Japanese Prime Minister visited the Yasukuni Shrine on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August (Seraphim 2006: 242), but this year's visit provoked a *much* stronger reaction, especially internationally, compared to the previous five years. The date of this visit, the clear message that it was an *official* visit (*JQ* 1985c: 452; Shimokoji 2003: 28-9; Seraphim 2006: 244) and the statements that Nakasone made about the past; together provoked a huge outcry from China, Korea and many other Asian countries, because it was interpreted as honoring the Class A war criminals whose spirits were enshrined at Yasukuni and therefore as symbolically indicating Japan's lack of contrition for its actions during the war. Also significant was the fact that Nakasone's visit not only drew criticism from officials in China, Korea and elsewhere, but also prompted anti-Japanese student protests in

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<sup>544</sup> In addition, reflecting the myth of the Emperor's lack of responsibility for the war that had been perpetuated since the Occupation period, Prime Minister Takeshita also stated "at the time of Hirohito's death...that the war 'broke out in spite of his wishes'" (Chira 1989).

<sup>545</sup> In addition, the LDP's focus on educational reform prompted increased media coverage of educational issues and textbook content, which led in turn to the Japanese media's extensive coverage of textbook content in the summer of 1982, which is what led to the internationalization of the textbook controversy (Nozaki and Inokuchi 2000: 112-3; Nozaki 2008: 79-80).

Beijing and other Chinese cities (Reston 1985; Whiting 1989: 6, 67-8), which were a harbinger of later popular demonstrations against Japan in both China and Korea. As a result of official complaints and these popular protests, Nakasone cancelled a planned visit to the Yasukuni Shrine only two months later (Shimokoji 2003: 32). And in August 1986, despite strong pressure from fellow LDP Diet members, Nakasone decided not to visit the shrine in *any* capacity (Whiting 1989: 62). Moreover, Nakasone did not visit the shrine again for the remainder of his tenure as prime minister.

Finally, during this period several high-level Japanese politicians made revisionist statements denying the existence of the Nanjing Massacre, disavowing that Japan's behavior in the war was aggressive, and/or lauding aspects of Japan's colonization of Korea or fighting in China. These so-called 'gaffes,' or "anti-apologies" as Yamazaki (2006: 91) terms them, began in 1986, and were taken as troubling signs of conservative elite opinion in Japan. Moreover, the term 'gaffe' is a misnomer, as most of these statements do not seem to have been accidental remarks, and some analysts view them as efforts by nationalist politicians to counter criticism from foreign media and from the left in Japan.<sup>546</sup> For the most part, I do not count the statements themselves as official, since they were primarily by officials who did not 'speak' for the state on history issues.<sup>547</sup> Importantly, however, the reactions of the government to these statements do signal the official position. Thus in this phase, the cabinet officials who made these statements were fired for doing so, which signaled that the statements did not reflect the official position of the Japanese government. The first 'gaffe' was by the Education Minister FUJIO Masayuki in 1986, who, in an interview with a conservative monthly journal, "argued that Japan 'did nothing to be ashamed of' during the war" (Jenkins 1992). Fujio was asked to recant by Prime Minister Nakasone, and when he refused to do so, he was fired from his post as Education Minister (Wakamiya 1998: 15, 200; Moosa 1986). Moreover, his firing was followed up with a statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Gotoda, that "Fujio's remarks were 'deeply regrettable because ... (they) gave birth to doubts over our country's policy to pursue peace and friendly foreign relations, based on the grave reflections of the last war'" (Moosa 1986). Beyond firing Fujio, "Prime Minister Nakasone ... also admitted Japan's wartime aggression in front of the Japanese Diet" (Eykholt 2000: 39). Two years later, in the spring of 1988, Cabinet Minister OKUNO Seisuke, who was the Director General of the National Land Agency, made a series of revisionist public statements, including that "Japan 'had no intention' of invading China" (Haberman 1988), that "Japan fought the war in order to secure its safety" (*The New York Times* 1988), and that "'it [wa]s nonsense to call Japan the aggressor or militaristic'" (Wakamiya 1998: 11). In contrast to the official response to Fujio's statement the previous year, though, Japanese officials initially tried to make light of the importance of Okuno's statements because of his domestic political weight (*The New York Times* 1988). However, as criticism of his statement mounted and Okuno refused to recant or apologize, he was forced to resign by Prime Minister Takeshita (*Chicago Sun-Times Wires* 1988).

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<sup>546</sup> One interviewee made this last point (Author's interview with journalist at *Asahi Shimbun* [J-12], Tokyo, July 2008). Yoshida also discusses the intentional and unapologetic nature of these so-called gaffes (2000: 109-10).

<sup>547</sup> This was not the case for all of the 'gaffes' in this period. FUJIO Masayuki, for instance, was the Minister of Education when his controversial interview was published in 1986. While his position as education minister, according to my guidelines, would lead me to count his statements as official; the fact that he was fired from his cabinet position as a result of the statements signaled that this was not acceptable to the state as a reflection of the official position.

## – Chapter 8 – History, Identity and Apology (1990 – 2008)

“We know we have to make a sincere apology, but at the same time we are sort of bored with making these statements.”

-- Yoshiki Mine, a Japanese official, August 1995<sup>548</sup>

### *Introduction*

This chapter traces the changes and continuities in Japan’s narrative of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War throughout the period from 1990 through 2008. This covers the last three phases of the official narrative, which came to include the step apologizing in Phase Five and then backtracked in the last phase to resume mythmaking and relativizing (while also continuing to include apologizing.) The key factors that led to the shift to apologizing were external pressures from China and South Korea, important changes in the international and domestic contexts that shaped this narrative, and the agency and goals of official actors in Japan. At the same time, political dynamics within Japan were, in many cases, the most important determinants of the content and magnitude of changes in the narrative in the three phases discussed in this chapter.

### *Phase Four (1990 – 1994): Unfreezing the question of history*<sup>549</sup>

Phase Four of the narrative began in 1990 and extended until June 1994. The narrative shifted one step in this phase, no longer mythmaking about and relativizing the events. As a result, the narrative covered three points on the continuum in this phase: acknowledging the events, acknowledging harm and expressing regret, and admitting responsibility. The most notable changes in this phase were that the content of official statements advanced, more strongly acknowledging wrongdoing and explicitly acknowledging a broader set of victims. In addition, non-Japanese victims were acknowledged in an official commemoration for first time in 1993. And finally, textbooks’ coverage of the Nanjing Massacre and other war crimes expanded from about 1992.

The sources of the changes in this phase were primarily structural, namely: the death of the Showa Emperor, the end of the Cold War and Japan’s desire to increase its international political standing in uncertain and changing times, and the end of LDP rule (at least for a brief period.) In terms of independent variables, while international activism began to be visible in this phase, and played an important role in leading to the change in Japan’s narrative about the ‘comfort

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<sup>548</sup> This statement was made by a Japanese official who worked at the Asian Women’s Fund, which was set up by the Japanese government in 1995 to offer compensation and an official apology to former “comfort women.” The statement was quoted in an article in *The Christian Science Monitor* on 15 August 1995 (Barr 1995b).

<sup>549</sup> This phrase is a spin on a statement by the *Asahi Shimbun*’s then-political correspondent MIURA Toshiaki in an *ABC News: Nightline* roundtable discussion in August 2001. In this discussion, Miura stated: “I think in east Asia the Cold War froze the question of history, and now for the last decade it has come up as a big issue” (Gordon et al. 2001).

women,' it did not have much impact on Japan's narrative of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War until the next phase. Similarly, while pressure from South Korea helped push Japanese officials to issue the first apologies for the 'comfort women' program and for Japan's colonization of the Korean peninsula, as China was more concerned with regaining its international legitimacy in the wake of the Tiananmen Square massacre, Chinese pressure was not a major driver of the changes in this phase.

At the same time, there continued to be domestic constraints on change, the most notable of which were the continued power of conservative politicians in the LDP and the political influence of nationalist interest groups. In addition, bureaucrats and some politicians continued to be concerned with the issue of compensation, which remained a factor in the government's opposition to lawsuits and calls for compensation, but also in bureaucrats' reluctance to issue clear apologies and/or to explicitly acknowledge Japanese responsibility in particular war crimes.

### *The domestic and international context*

The most important contextual factors in this phase related to four events: the death in January 1989 of the Japanese Emperor Hirohito, ending a source of continuity that supported the official narrative; the Tiananmen Square massacre six months later; the loss of power by the Liberal Democratic Party after 38 years in 1993; and the end of the Cold War. As Seraphim writes, these momentous changes "marked a pivotal point in the history of memory in Japan, when issues of war and postwar responsibility for Japan's war conduct in Asia became tied to the politics of redefining its position in the world" (2006: 26).

As mentioned in Phase Three, the illness and then the death of the Showa Emperor (Hirohito) led to the questioning and gradual breakdown of the taboo on the discussion of the Emperor's responsibility for the war (Masumi 1995). Beginning in the year before his death, domestic actors across the spectrum in Japan began openly questioning his responsibility, out-of-bounds since the US Occupation. This discussion changed domestic attitudes toward Japan's past actions (Hein and Selden 2000b: 25). Emperor Hirohito had not visited China in the forty-four years after the end of the war, and had only issued extremely vague statements about 'unfortunate events' at a 'certain point in time.' The ascension to the throne of a new emperor ended this particular constraint on change. And yet while Emperor Akihito's comments about the war have been less vague and have signaled greater regret, the change has been fairly limited. Two institutional factors are largely responsible. One is the control over the Emperor's statements and actions wielded by the Imperial Household agency, the bureaucracy that organizes the Emperor's actions, along with all public aspects of the imperial family's life (*South China Morning Post* 1992). The other factor is that the Emperor is prohibited in the Constitution from making *political* statements or actions, and so all his statements are considered and planned carefully by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet.<sup>550</sup>

Occurring within months of Hirohito's death, the shooting of unarmed democracy activists in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in June 1989 affected Japan's narrative in two important but contradictory ways. First, the Communist regime needed to bolster its domestic legitimacy,

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<sup>550</sup> In addition, because Akihito is Hirohito's son, the issue of filial loyalty is likely a further limitation on the potential for Akihito to strongly criticize the war, which was waged in his father's name.



which led to a redoubled focus on patriotic education. “In 1994, the [Chinese] government issued a six-page directive outlining methods to update patriotic education and increase its relevance for today’s youth. ... The government selected 100 ‘patriotic education bases,’ such as the Nanjing museum, around the country for schoolchildren to visit to learn of past humiliations” (Leslie Chang 1999). As a result of these policies, “popular accounts of the [Nanjing] massacre became widely available to the public, and the Japanese revisionists became notorious among the general [Chinese] public” (Yoshida 2006b: 154). In subsequent phases Chinese nationalists pressured their government to take a tougher line on history issues (Wan 2006: 129), and put direct pressure on Japan themselves in the form of protests and boycotts of Japanese products. Second, in the wake of the massacre and the Chinese government’s crackdown on civil society, the Communist regime and its leaders were shunned by the international community. Thus, when in August 1991 Japan’s Prime Minister became the first leader of a democratic country to visit China following the massacre (Nickerson 1991), Chinese officials were grateful. The next year they willingly agreed not to mention or allow any references to history issues as part of the bargaining that led to Emperor Akihito’s visit to China in October 1992 (Kohut and Alexander 1992; Wakamiya 1998: 283).

As in the Turkish case, the end of the Cold War was a watershed that also impacted the politics that shaped Japan’s official narrative in contradictory ways. The end of the US’ rivalry with the Soviet Union lessened its need to support Japan so strongly in East Asia, removing the absolute guarantee of the US’ support for political stability above all other concerns. The Cold War’s end made space for other concerns to be voiced and considered, particularly internationally, which meant that pressure on Japan about acknowledging its dark past intensified. Moreover, Japanese politicians increasingly recognized that if Japan wanted to play a more prominent *political* role at the international level, including securing a permanent seat on an expanded UN Security Council, one of its main foreign policy goals throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, then it would have to address more effectively the persistent criticisms of its official narratives regarding WWII (*The Guardian* 1993; Lam 1993). But, the end of the Cold War also prompted Japanese officials to begin working to alter the nature of Sino-Japanese relations, from a “special relationship” in which Japan was careful to help and not to offend China, to a more “normal” relationship (Wan 2006: 84-5, 117-8). And finally, the removal of the common Soviet threat gradually led China to be more wary of both the US’ relationship with Japan, and of Japan as a potential security threat to China (Wan 2006: 202-3).

Shifting to more specific contextual factors, the first Gulf War served to expose the limitations of Japan’s “Peace Constitution,” which prevented Japan from contributing troops. While Japan contributed \$13 billion to the war, this financial contribution was under-appreciated in comparison with other countries’ commitments of personnel (Pyle 1998). This experience highlighted for Japanese leaders the continuing gap between the country’s economic status and its international political status, and led to the 1992 passage of a law allowing Japanese forces to participate in international peacekeeping missions.

Domestically, an important juncture in Japan’s domestic politics occurred in 1993, when for the first time since 1955, the Liberal Democratic Party was out of power. A coalition government consisting of eight parties and headed by the former LDP-member HOSOKAWA Morihiro took office in August 1993. This affected the politics of history in two ways. It removed a key source

of domestic continuity in Japan's narrative (if only for a short time.) Moreover, the coalition government that assumed power in 1993 included the Japan Socialist Party and other progressive politicians and parties, some of whom had publicly asserted the need for Japan to express greater remorse for its past wrongs (Jones 1993). Shortly before taking office, the coalition released a statement indicating “its readiness to cooperate in promoting peace and development in Asia and the world with repentance for involvement in World War II” (*Asian Political News Kyodo News International, Inc.* 1993). The incoming Deputy Prime Minister, HATA Tsutomu made similar comments in a speech at the time (Hills 1993).

Finally, in this period Japan's narratives regarding the colonization of Korea and the so-called ‘comfort women’ program of forced prostitution came under intense pressure, leading to a dramatic development: the first clear and official apologies for aspects of Japan's war crimes. This altered the context of the narrative of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War. Thus, in May 1990, the Japanese Prime Minister KAIFU Toshiki issued the first apology using the word ‘owabi,’ which is a direct and more informal word for ‘apology’ (Field 1995: 413) to the people of South Korea. In his statement, Kaifu told the Korean President ROH Tae Woo: “During a period in the past, the people of the Korean peninsula experienced unbearable grief and suffering because of the actions of our country. (We) are humbly remorseful (*kenkyo no hansei*) and wish to note our frank feelings of apology (*owabi*)” (as quoted in Yamazaki 2006: 42).<sup>551</sup> In the same visit, Emperor Akihito declared: “I think of the sufferings your people underwent during this unfortunate period, which was brought about by my country, and cannot but feel the deepest regret” (*South China Morning Post* 1992). And yet while the Emperor's statement expressed greater contrition than Emperor Hirohito had,<sup>552</sup> because the Korean government had pressed Japanese officials for an *apology* from the Emperor, they were disappointed with both the apology by the Prime Minister and with Emperor Akihito's statement (Jenkins 1992b).

Then in January 1992, the Japanese Cabinet issued an official statement that acknowledged that the Japanese military had been involved in the ‘comfort women stations’ and expressed “sincere apology and regret to those who endured suffering beyond description” (Yamazaki 2006: 59), which was the most explicit and detailed official apology to date. This Cabinet statement was closely followed by the Japanese Prime Minister Miyazawa's visit to Korea in late January 1992, in which he expressed “remorse (*hansei*) and apology (*owabi*)” to the Korean people and explicitly referred to the “military comfort women” (Yamazaki 2006: 60). Moreover, in August 1993, after the Japanese government had completed an investigation into the “comfort women” system, the Chief Cabinet Secretary KONO Yohei issued official remarks (*danwa*) on behalf of the government, acknowledging that the “Japanese military was, directly or indirectly, involved in the establishment and management of the comfort stations and the transfer of comfort women,” describing some details of the system, and expressing “sincere apologies and remorse to all those ... who suffered immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological

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<sup>551</sup> Yamazaki further writes that “the most significant thing in this apology is the use of the word *owabi* which specifically means ‘apology,’ thus going beyond the ‘regrets’ and ‘remorse’ of previous statements” (2006: 42).

<sup>552</sup> The journalist David Jenkins notes that “although Akihito acknowledged Japan's wartime responsibility more directly than his late father, Hirohito, ever had, he stopped short of an apology, speaking instead of his ‘deepest regret’ (*makotoni ikan*) for the suffering Japan had caused. The former Emperor had only said that he ‘deeply deplored’ (*fukaku kanashimi*) the war” (1992b).

wounds as comfort women” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1993). These changes arose in response to several factors that are described below, including the discovery of evidence documenting the government’s involvement, pressure by the South Korean government on Japan, and pressure by activists in South Korea and in Japan. Moreover, the *danwa* was issued right before the LDP left office, a sign that the LDP knew that the winds were changing domestically and internationally and the party needed to take action so as not to be upstaged by the incoming non-LDP government.

Finally, in this phase the relative economic balance of power between China and Japan began to shift. The first sign was the bursting of Japan’s housing bubble in 1990, which ushered in a decade-long recession. At the same time, “the rise of a market economy in China based on the consolidation of trade, investment and government-sponsored ODA” (Xu 2007: 87) was producing rapid and significant results, with average growth rates in the double-digits for the five years between 1991 and 1996.

### *Independent variables*

In this phase, there was a flowering of research and discussion related to Japan’s war responsibility. At the same time, there was continued resistance to this trend, particularly among conservative politicians and bureaucrats, who were themselves reluctant to issue apologies or compensation, and who were also sensitive to the likely political repercussions among important nationalist constituencies. As a result, these constraints pulled back against the trend toward change in this phase, limiting the influence of the contextual shifts and domestic pressures for greater change.

In addition, there was a significant degree of pressure from South Korea in this phase, which contributed to the official apologies that Japanese officials made for the ‘comfort women’ program (of which the majority of victims were Korean) and for Japan’s colonization of Korea. That said, there was less pressure from China in this phase, in part because its leaders were more concerned with repairing the international fallout from the Tiananmen Square massacre. Nevertheless, Chinese leaders did draw on this issue to pressure Japanese officials to agree to allow the Emperor to visit China in 1992.

### *Within the domestic sphere*

Related to the momentous changes in international politics, Japan’s desire for greater international legitimacy and prominence, and the coincidence of a series of major war-related anniversaries in the early to mid-1990s, a number of Japanese politicians and other elites began to propose that Japan express greater contrition for its wartime actions to non-Japanese victims. Thus, “in May 1990, Doi Takako, then chairwoman of the SDPJ, called for a Diet resolution that would express Japan’s war responsibility and apologize for its colonial rule of neighboring Asian countries” (Masumi 1995: 424). The following year, which was the anniversary of Japan’s invasion of China in 1931 and of its attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, some LDP members considered whether the Diet should issue an apology for the war, but this idea did not advance because of opposition from conservatives within the party (Yamazaki 2006: 94; Jones 1993). At the same time, opposition parties called for Japan to openly face its past (Kunii 1991). Finally, in

1993, Doi reported that the Diet was “considering a ... resolution offering an official apology (*shazai*) for aggression against Asian nations” (Seaton 2007: 89).

At the same time, domestic public opinion surveys consistently indicated that a majority of the Japanese public believed that the government should express greater contrition and apologize for its past wrongs, and a large portion of those surveyed even indicated support for increased compensation for non-Japanese victims. For example, the results of a national survey of 3,000 respondents that was conducted by the Kyoto news agency in the fall of 1992 showed that “a clear majority of Japanese [55%] believe[d] Emperor Akihito should apologise for Japanese wartime atrocities in China when he visits Beijing next week [i.e., in October 1992]” (Crabb 1992). And Seraphim writes that “among the 20- and 30-year-olds polled in 1993, ... 78 percent wanted to see the government pay compensation to countries in which Japanese forces had committed atrocities” (2006: 276). Furthermore, new evidence of Japan’s wartime atrocities was uncovered by academics and others in Japan, and efforts were launched to document and publicize Japan’s past wrongs. One of the most notable developments was the discovery and publication of evidence confirming the Japanese government’s role in the so-called comfort women program during the war. The evidence was found by the Japanese historian YOSHIMI Yoshiaki in the archives of the Defense Agency (Onishi 2007), and he announced his discovery of these documents only a few days before the Japanese Prime Minister Miyazawa began an official visit to South Korea (Goldsborough 1992). This evidence was a key factor that led to the government’s subsequent official apology for its involvement in the comfort women program.

More broadly, several ‘peace museums’ were established in Japan in this period. The historian Roger Jeans writes that, “as the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war approached, the beginnings of a new Japanese attitude toward the war were made manifest in the appearance of several new museums. Known as ‘aggression’ museums and ‘peace’ museums, they were built in Osaka, Kyoto, Kawasaki, Saitama, and Okinawa” (2005: 167). Moreover, as Yoshida notes, by including non-Japanese victims of Japan’s aggression, these museums took an approach that was different from existing museums and exhibits about the WWII period (2006b: 135-6). The most well-known of these is the Osaka International Peace Center, which was funded by the local and prefectural governments and opened in 1991, and whose exhibits included the Nanjing Massacre (Burrell 1992). In 1993 Japanese scholars and activists also established the Center of Research and Documentation on Japan’s War Responsibility (JWRC), which focused on Japan’s war responsibility.<sup>553</sup>

Finally, other evidence and documentation of Japan’s war crimes was discovered in this period, and in many cases the government tried to suppress or cover up the information, while citizens’ groups fought against these efforts. Perhaps the most shocking of these discoveries was of human bones that were buried under what had been the location of the Imperial Army Medical School, where medical and biological experiments had been conducted on live prisoners during the war. The bones, which were discovered in 1989 when construction was begun on a new building, apparently bore many indications of such experiments. The Japanese government

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<sup>553</sup> Interestingly, Seraphim notes that the center was inspired by a similar research institute in Germany (2006: 276), which is an indication of how international learning and the spread of ideas began to play a part in these processes of contestation in the post-Cold War period. For more on the Center, see its website, at: <http://space.geocities.jp/japanwarres/center/english/index-english.htm>, accessed on 17 July 2011.

“declared the bones of no historic interest” and argued that they should be destroyed (Nickerson 1992), but this was opposed by a group of citizens, leading to a drawn-out lawsuit that progressed all the way to Japan’s Supreme Court (McGill and Akagawa 1998). In December 2000 the citizens’ group lost, and in June 2001 the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare declared that it had found no evidence of torture or atrocities in its study of the bones (*Japan Times Online* 2002).

#### From international sources

Internationally, two new sources of pressure arose in this period. Beginning in 1991, an activist movement arose in the US to demand that Japan apologize for its WWII-era atrocities and crimes, particularly its crimes in China during the Second Sino-Japanese War. And while the impact of this movement was primarily evident in the next phase, its formative period was in the early 1990s. The movement was led by Chinese- and Taiwanese-Americans in Northern California, but within several years it had expanded to include other groups in the US and connected with groups that were mobilized around the same issue in other countries. The first group, which was established in California in 1991, was the Alliance for the Preservation of Truth of the Sino-Japanese War.<sup>554</sup> In 1994 a larger umbrella organization was formed, which was known as the Global Alliance for Preserving the History of WW II in Asia, and which initially consisted of fifteen different groups (*Houston Chronicle* 1996). Several broad factors contributed to this movement’s formation. One was the US Congress’ passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which included an official apology and reparations to surviving Japanese-Americans who had been forcibly interned during World War II. This was the result of more than two decades of political activism by Japanese-American groups in the United States, and in its wake, some of the individuals and groups who had worked on this issue joined the redress movement (Dobbs 2000). A second was the increasing incidence of and the media firestorms attending Japanese officials’ ‘gaffes’ in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which, combined with Japanese officials’ vague statements of regret, shaped these activists’ sense of insult at Japan’s reluctance to clearly apologize for its war crimes (Dao 1998).

The second international source of pressure that emerged in this phase mirrored the redress movement that arose in the US. In China and South Korea, citizens’ groups began to form to speak out about their suffering in the war, and to press Japan to apologize and to compensate them for their suffering (*Asian Political News Kyodo News International, Inc.* 1993). In South Korea, women’s groups mobilized to support the few former sex slaves who courageously testified to their own horrendous experiences, to pressure the Japanese government to acknowledge its organization of the ‘comfort women’ program and to compensate the surviving women. In particular, in December 1991 “three elderly South Korean women, breaking half a century of silence, filed suit against the Japanese government saying they were forced to have sex with Japanese soldiers in frontline brothels. Since then, other Korean and Filipino women have also taken legal action” (*Asian Political News Kyodo News International, Inc.* 1993). This was one of the earliest international activist movements to press Japan for redress for specific WWII-era crimes, and it contributed to Japan’s apology for the government’s involvement in the

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<sup>554</sup> The Alliance was established following an exhibit commemorating the Nanjing Massacre, after which the organizers were inspired to take action to press the Japanese government to better address and apologize for its crimes in the Second Sino-Japanese War.

‘comfort women’ program. Similarly, groups in China, South Korea and Taiwan began to mobilize and demand compensation from Japan for former slave laborers, victims of germ and biological warfare and experiments, and victims of atrocities like the Nanjing Massacre. In 1992, a group called the Committee for Chinese Civilians Seeking Compensation against Japan was established in China, and would later file one of the first cases demanding compensation for Chinese war victims in a Japanese court (O’Neill 1995). Moreover, Wan writes that “On March 21, 1992, Tong Zeng and about 10,000 Chinese citizens issued an open letter to the Japanese Diet, asking for apologies and compensation for a wide range of Japanese atrocities committed during the war” (2006: 304). Yet, while this and other groups began to take action in this phase, their activism was more prominent in the next phase.

### *The dependent variable*

In this period, Japanese officials began to issue the first apologies for WWI-era crimes, signaling greater contrition than in the previous phases, but these first apologies were not offered to either China or Taiwan, and did not refer to the Nanjing Massacre or the Second Sino-Japanese War. As described above, the first official ‘apologies’ were issued to Koreans: in 1990 for the colonization of the Korean peninsula, and in 1992, for the Japanese government’s involvement in Korean women’s suffering in the “comfort women” system. Aside from these two apologies, however, other official statements in this period expressed deeper remorse and acknowledged a broader set of victims, but did not clearly apologize to China or others for Japan’s wartime atrocities and crimes.

In May 1991, during a visit to Singapore, the Japanese Prime Minister Kaifu made a statement that was not an apology, but that went further than previous statements (Nickerson 1991; Siow 1991). He “offered ‘our sincere contrition for past Japanese actions which inflicted unbearable suffering and sorrow upon a great many people of the Asia-Pacific region. The Japanese people are firmly resolved never again to repeat those actions, which had tragic consequences’” (Debenport 1993).<sup>555</sup> As in Prime Minister Kaifu’s apology to the Korean people the year before, he also declared a commitment to teach the next generation of Japanese about Japan’s dark past (Siow 1991). About six months later, the Foreign Ministry came up with a ‘new’ official formulation – prompted in part by the occurrence of the fiftieth anniversary of Japan’s bombing of Pearl Harbor – but it was not much different from the statement made by Prime Minister Kaifu in Singapore earlier in the year. The new formulation, as stated by the Foreign Minister WATANABE Michio, was: “‘We felt deep remorse (fukaku hansei) about the unbearable suffering and sorrow Japan inflicted on the American people and the peoples of Asia and the Pacific during the Pacific War’” (Jenkins 1992). And while this statement was extended to include not just Asians but also “the American people,” officials consciously avoided using the word “apology” out of concern that if they had done so, “some people in our country [might have argued] that we had totally negated our entire past history” (Jenkins 1992).

In addition, in October 1992 the new Heisei Emperor and his wife made a formal visit to China. In the course of this visit, Emperor Akihito expressed his ‘deep sorrow’ for the “unfortunate period in which my country inflicted great sufferings on the people of China” (Sun 1992), but he did not mention the Nanjing Massacre or other details (*Agence France-Presse* 1998b). While this

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<sup>555</sup> For the text of this statement, see: Wakamiya 1998: 253.

statement was explicitly not an apology (Preston 1992) and was heavy with euphemism, it went further than any statements made by the previous Showa Emperor about Japan's actions in China, demonstrating the impact of Emperor Hirohito's death on the official narrative. The change inherent in the Emperor's statement was particularly limited, however, by the administration's awareness that more nationalist and conservative Diet members within the ruling LDP, powerful conservative interest groups like the *Nihon Izokukai*, and the sometimes-violent ultranationalists in Japan would strongly and negatively react to any statement that shifted the official narrative too much in the direction of apology.<sup>556</sup> As a result of these domestic political concerns, Prime Minister Miyazawa and his cabinet conducted political negotiations and deliberated for several months before deciding to accept China's invitation for the Emperor to visit the country, and only did so after securing promises from Chinese officials that the Emperor would not experience any pressure to apologize for Japan's past wrongs and would not be put "in an awkward position" in any way (Wakamiya 1998: 283). Thus, when the Emperor's visit was announced in August 1992, Japanese officials stated that the Emperor would neither apologize nor visit the city of Nanjing during his trip.<sup>557</sup> This outcome represented officials' attempt to compromise between Chinese desires for the Emperor to visit in the anniversary year of normalization and the demands of conservatives in the LDP and ultranationalist activists that he not visit China at all. It was revealed two years later that Miyazawa had promised the Japan Association of War-bereaved Families that he would secretly visit the Yasukuni Shrine as part of the domestic political negotiations that attended this decision to allow the Emperor to make this visit (*Reuters News* 1994).

Moving beyond these tentative shifts in the content of official statements, in late 1993 the new Prime Minister and head of the first non-LDP ruling coalition in 38 years, HOSOKAWA Morihiro, boldly declared that the war had been a 'mistake' for Japan, and that it was a 'war of aggression.'<sup>558</sup> In the same news conference, Hosokawa also declared that Japan should "'clearly express our remorse at and atonement for our past history'" (Jones 1993). These statements went notably further than previous assessments of the war by the government, particularly in calling the war a 'mistake,' and in using the term 'aggression,' rather than simply calling Japan's conduct in the war 'aggressive.'<sup>559</sup> While this distinction might seem slight, Yamazaki explains that the difference between the word 'aggression' and the phrase 'acts of aggression' was quite significant in the Japanese context. She writes that,

"in the Diet in May 1994 an opposition legislator explained the difference in terminology to Prime Minister Hata (who followed Hosokawa) as follows: 'When you say 'acts of aggression,' you are indicating individual or regimental actions, acts that were against policy, specific instances of wrongdoing that can be considered 'illegal,' whereas when you say 'war of aggression,' you are criticizing the war as a whole. It's a completely different dimension. (Yoshida 1994: 24)" (2006: 81).

Moreover, Hosokawa was aware of this distinction, notes the prominent journalist and political

<sup>556</sup> Terry McCarthy 1992; Crabb 1992.

<sup>557</sup> Rafferty 1992; *Straits Times* 1992.

<sup>558</sup> He stated in a press conference: "My [own personal] understanding is that it was a war of aggression, a mistaken/wrong war" (Yamazaki 2006: 74). See also: Seaton 2007: 56; Jones 1993; Nozaki 2008: 142.

<sup>559</sup> Wakamiya 1998: 180; Yamazaki 2006: 74-5.

analyst WAKAMIYA Yoshibumi, and explicitly chose to go “one step further, using the balder nominal form, ‘aggression’” (1998: 180). In response, 72% of the 3,000 Japanese surveyed in a national poll shortly thereafter indicated their support for Hosokawa’s statement (Masumi 1995: 422), but there was also an immediately negative response from nationalists and ultranationalists, both within and outside the Diet. In particular, Hosokawa was criticized by Diet members, including HASHIMOTO Ryutaro, who was a powerful LDP member and the head of the Japan Association of War-bereaved Families, by the right-wing newspaper *Sankei Shimbun*, and by various ultranationalists. Hashimoto “criticized Hosokawa’s statements for implying that only Japan had been aggressive (when, Hashimoto claimed, Western powers had acted with equal or greater aggressiveness), and for opening the door to myriad unjust reparation claims from self-defined ‘victims’ of Japanese aggression” (Benfell 2002). Similarly, a newspaper article at the time noted that, as a result of his remarks, Hosokawa “faced considerable criticism from MPs, some of whom claim that he is defaming Japan’s patriotic soldiers who fought to liberate Asia from Western colonialism, while others fear being landed with a huge bill for compensation” (Rafferty 1993). Moreover, directly in response to Hosokawa’s statements, a group of more than one hundred Diet members formed a committee – called the Committee to Examine History (*Rekishi kento iinkai*) – the goal of which “was to absolve the war dead of disgrace and to teach the correct historical view to other Diet members” (Yoshida 2006b: 141).<sup>560</sup> As these comments indicate, the two main criticisms were that such statements exposed Japan to possible individual claims for compensation, and that they unpatriotically besmirched the memories and sacrifices of Japanese soldiers.

Beyond the shift in official rhetoric in Hosokawa’s statements, in 1993 non-Japanese and Asian victims were explicitly acknowledged for first time in the annual August 15<sup>th</sup> ceremony commemorating the victims of the war. This broader category of victims was recognized in speeches by Prime Minister Hosokawa and DOI Takako, who was the speaker of the lower house of the Diet (Yoshida 2006b: 132; Wakamiya 1998: 28). In his speech, Hosokawa stated: “we take this opportunity to go beyond our national boundaries in stating our feelings of sincere sympathy toward all victims of war, starting with Asian nations and their families” (Yamazaki 2006: 76), while Doi recognized “the people on both sides who were made wretched (*itamashii*) victims in the last war [who] are numbered in the thousands of ten thousands” (*Ibid.*: 78).<sup>561</sup> Finally, in a formal Diet speech a week later, Hosokawa expressed “profound remorse and apologies” for “past Japanese actions, including aggression and colonial rule.”<sup>562</sup> Importantly, this statement was perceived by some as backtracking from his statements of the prior two weeks, in that it did not refer to the entire war as a “war of aggression” (Rafferty 1993; Seaton 2007: 89). Moreover, in contrast to his speech on August 15<sup>th</sup>, Hosokawa’s remarks in his Diet speech did not explicitly mention particular victims of Japan’s past actions. Nevertheless, taken together Hosokawa’s statements marked important shifts in the official narrative, identifying a

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<sup>560</sup> Going much further than these protests and political actions, in May 1994 an ultranationalist who was reportedly angry over Hosokawa’s war-related statements tried to shoot him shortly after the end of his tenure as Prime Minister (Pollack 1994).

<sup>561</sup> For the full text of both Hosokawa’s and Doi’s speeches, see: Yamazaki 2006: 148-9.

<sup>562</sup> In this speech, Hosokawa stated: “I believe it is important at this juncture that we state clearly before all the world our remorse at our past history and our renewed determination to do better. I would thus like to take this opportunity to express anew our profound remorse and apologies for the fact that past Japanese actions, including aggression and colonial rule, caused unbearable suffering and sorrow for so many people and to state that we will demonstrate our new determination by contributing more than ever before to world peace” (Yamazaki 2006: 150).



broader set of victims for the first time, and more clearly marking Japan's actions as wrong (Yamazaki 2006: 71).

Also in this period, coverage of the Nanjing Massacre in Japanese textbooks increased, with estimates of the death toll regularly cited, and the event appearing in the majority of junior and high school history textbooks. Textbooks also more openly and critically described Japan's aggression and crimes during World War II (Reid 1994; Rose 2005: 58). These developments reflected changes in the curriculum announced in 1989. According to one expert, "New educational curricula adopted by the Education Minister in 1989 include 'forthright statements about the exploitation of neighboring Asian countries and wartime aggression'" (Burress 1995a). The new curricula also required much more coverage of recent history than had previously been the case (Reid 1994), meaning that textbooks and teachers would likely cover more of WWII. More generally, changes in textbook coverage also reflected the changing perceptions of publishers regarding what could pass the approval process at the Ministry of Education and changing expectations of textbook reviewers within the ministry. These changes, in turn, occurred as a result of several factors, most notably: the discoveries of new evidence discussed above,<sup>563</sup> the greater degrees of acknowledgement in official statements regarding the 'comfort women' as well as the nature of the war as a whole,<sup>564</sup> and the LDP's leaving office in 1993.<sup>565</sup>

Thus, when the Washington Post analyzed "the 12 textbooks most widely used in Japanese schools" in 1994, it reported that "every text surveyed discussed the infamous 'Rape of Nanjing,'" and these discussions included "estimates of the dead ranging from 110,000 to 300,000" (Reid 1994). Moreover, Rose writes that an analysis of the high school history textbooks authorized by the Education Ministry in 1992 revealed that a notably higher degree of coverage of Japan's WWII crimes was allowed. She summarizes some of the key findings of this study, writing:

"In general, the number of pages devoted to topics such as the war increased (which is all the more notable given that overall the textbooks were shorter), with more detail, and improved use of language and phraseology. Specifically, the word 'invasion' or 'aggression' (*shinryaku*) replaced advance or incident (*shinshutsu* or *jiken*), and phrases such as 'Chinese and Japanese troops clashed' were changed to 'Japanese troops fought with Chinese troops' so that in general Japanese behaviour was no longer using the passive voice, and responsibility was seen to lie with Japan. All the textbooks took up the Nanjing Massacre although they varied in their reference to the number of casualties. Some books moved this information up from the footnotes, and where previously texts had described the events as reported events, they were now described as fact. The word 'rape' was not always allowed by the Ministry of Education but on the issue of casualties it was acceptable to state the figures accepted at the Tokyo trial. Unit 731 was mentioned in most of the textbooks (previous reference to this had not even been allowed in footnotes) and details of the sort of experiments that took place there appeared in most

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<sup>563</sup> Nozaki argues that the changes were particularly influenced by advances in scholarship (2008: 129).

<sup>564</sup> Nozaki makes this point in relation to the increasing coverage of the 'comfort women' system in textbooks in the 1990s (2002: 613).

<sup>565</sup> One article stated that, "when the LDP was defeated in 1993, the new Hosokawa government ordered textbooks to be revised to address more directly Japanese wartime atrocities" (Garran 1997).

books. Reference to the use of forced labour and comfort women also began to appear in texts” (Rose 2005: 58).<sup>566</sup>

In particular, a 1994 high school history textbook stated that in Nanjing, the Japanese army committed a “great slaughter against the Chinese military and civilians” and “large-scale plundering, arson and massacre” (Murdo 1996).<sup>567</sup> A world history textbook stated that the Japanese Army “mass-murdered huge numbers of Chinese prisoners of war” and “committed atrocities such as murdering civilians ... assaulting women, setting fire, and plundering” (Nozaki 2008: 129).<sup>568</sup>

In addition to these changes, a handful of high-level politicians from the LDP continued the pattern of making revisionist statements about Japan’s actions in the war. As in the previous phase, two of the three national-level politicians who made these “gaffes” were forced to apologize, and in the one case that was applicable, the official was forced to resign from his cabinet position. These ‘gaffes’ thus highlighted two facts. One is that there was a deep vein in the LDP that rejected and actively resisted the shift toward greater public and official acknowledgement of Japan’s war crimes. The other fact highlighted in these instances, however, was that these so-called ‘gaffes’ did not represent the official narrative. Thus in November 1990, LDP Diet member ISHIHARA Shintaro claimed in an interview with *Playboy* magazine that the Nanjing Massacre was a lie and a “fabrication.” While this statement prompted protests from domestic and international activists, Ishihara was not a cabinet minister, so the government took no action in this case. But when the Justice Minister Nagano denied the factuality of the Nanjing Massacre and Japanese aggression in May 1994,<sup>569</sup> he was forced by Prime Minister Hata to apologize, retract his statements and resign. Arguably, the government disavowed and distanced itself more strongly from this ‘gaffe,’ as compared to the two revisionist statements made in 1990, because over this period of four years the official narrative had come to acknowledge greater remorse for Japan’s wrongdoing, and the LDP’s hold on power had been rattled. Moreover, China and other Asian countries protested more strongly in response to the statements made in 1994 than they had in 1990, in China’s case reflecting the fact that it was no longer

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<sup>566</sup> The source that Rose cites is: Tawara and Ishiyama 1995: 70-6.

<sup>567</sup> This 1994 high school history textbook described the Nanjing Massacre as follows: “‘In December 1937, when occupying the KMT [Kuomintang] capital of Nanjing, the Japanese army caused a great slaughter against the Chinese military and civilians. Criticism arose internationally of this massacre, and resistance by the Chinese became stronger. (In a footnote the text says: ‘The large-scale plundering, arson and massacre by the Japanese army that occupied Nanjing is called the ‘Great Nanjing Massacre’ or the ‘Nanjing Incident.’ The victims, including that of the battle, are more than 200,000, according to Tomio Hora, and 300,000, according to China’)” (Murdo 1996).

<sup>568</sup> The World History textbook included a long paragraph describing the events that preceding the massacre, as well as more details about aspects of the massacre, part of which read: “The Japanese Army captured Nanjing on December 13, and then began a clean-up operation, during which time it mass-murdered huge numbers of Chinese prisoners of war. ... The Japanese Army committed atrocities such as murdering civilians who had not been able to flee for safety, and so stayed in Nanjing, assaulting women, setting fire, and plundering” (Nozaki 2008: 129).

<sup>569</sup> Yamazaki writes: “In May of 1994, Justice Minister Nagano Shigeto repeated objections to the terminology of Nanking ‘Massacre,’ again calling it ‘a fabrication.’ He did not deny that killing, rape, and pillage occurred, but he argued that the term ‘massacre’ was too strong. In the context of war, he argued, the proper term was perhaps ‘war crime,’ or ‘atrocities,’ but not ‘massacre’ (McCormack 1996: 227). Nagano also repeated the old argument that ‘the war should not be called aggression since Japan’s intent was to liberate colonies and establish a Co-Prosperty Sphere.’ In the uproar that followed these statements, Nagano was forced to resign and apologize” (2006: 93).

worried about regaining its international diplomatic standing in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre.

In addition to the government's rejection of these statements, societal actors also mobilized in response to these 'gaffes,' highlighting how feedback effects have been a part of the ongoing processes of contestation between societal groups, as well as between official and societal actors. The most notable response was by a group of lawyers from the Japan Democratic Lawyers' Association who, in the wake of Justice Minister Nagano's May 1994 remarks, began to look into and gather evidence of the war crimes and atrocities that Japan had committed in China during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Their investigations led the group to decide to help Chinese victims seek compensation in Japanese courts, which had an impact in the next phase.<sup>570</sup>

### ***Phase Five (1994 – 1998): Apology and acknowledgement***

Phase Five of the narrative began in late June 1994, when MURAYAMA Tomiichi became Prime Minister, and extended until the end of 1998. In this phase, the official narrative shifted one step, adding apologizing and thus comprising four points along the continuum: acknowledging the events, acknowledging harm and expressing regret, admitting responsibility, and apologizing. These changes came in the form of an official apology by the Japanese Prime Minister, increased coverage of the Nanjing Massacre and Japan's war crimes in textbooks, and the explicit acknowledgement of the Nanjing Massacre in official statements.

The changes in this phase were made in response to several factors. First, there were escalating calls from within and outside the country for Japan to apologize for its war crimes and compensate the victims. The most important of these were diplomatic protests from former victim states, most notably China and South Korea, who were increasingly frustrated with the frequent 'gaffes' by high-level Japanese officials and with the rise of revisionist nationalism in Japan. Moreover, growing international and domestic redress movements were putting increased pressure on Japan to apologize for its past wrongs and to compensate its victims.<sup>571</sup> As a result, political leaders and officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concluded that this pressure was likely to continue, despite the increased frequency and depth of official expressions of regret, remorse and reflection in the prior phase. Second, Japan's continued desire to play a more prominent role in international politics, which was complicated by the ongoing economic recession in Japan, had led officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to conclude that achieving this goal would require settling (or at least placating) the rancorous 'history issues' to some extent. As a result, leaders decided that the fiftieth anniversaries of many war-related events would be appropriate times to deepen the degree of contrition conveyed in the official narrative, with the hope that such a step would obviate the persistence of this issue as a point of contention in Japan's bilateral and regional relations (Wakamiya 1998: 20). This decision process was reinforced by the prime ministership of MURAYAMA Tomiichi, who had long been committed to the idea that Japan should do more to acknowledge its war responsibility, and who served in this phase as the first Socialist prime minister in Japan's postwar period. Aside from this high-level commitment to change, however, there were strong crosscurrents of contention over

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<sup>570</sup> Author's interview (anonymous) [J-8], Tokyo, July 2008; *The Times of India* 2000.

<sup>571</sup> Kishimoto (2004) also makes these first two points.

Japan's official narrative, both within Japan's domestic sphere and internationally. In particular, as officials considered the nature and degree of changes that would be permitted in official statements and actions, a vocal and organized movement opposed to such change mobilized domestically and succeeded in partially limiting and gradually clawing back some of the changes.

### *The domestic and international structural context*

The most important contextual factors in this phase were: the prime ministership of the Japan Socialist Party leader MURAYAMA Tomiichi, the advent of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war, Japan's internationalist ambitions, and the shifting balance of power between Japan and China.

One of the most important changes in the international context in this phase was in the relative balance of power between China and Japan. Over the course of the postwar period, Japan's economy had grown to become the second largest economy in the world, with some analysts predicting that Japan would eventually eclipse the US as the most powerful state in the international system. And yet, by the mid-1990s, the drawn-out recession that followed the collapse of Japan's real estate market in 1990 had taken its toll on domestic and international perceptions of the dynamism and potential of Japan's economy. At the same time, the bounding growth of China's economy meant that discussions about the 'rise of China' had begun to supplant interest in Japan's international leadership and 'economic miracle.' This shifting locus of power particularly affected Japanese leaders' and elites' assessments of Japan's role in the region and in the world (Pyle 1998), and contributed to the striking increase in revisionist nationalism in Japan (Kingston 2005). In particular, this shift led elites and analysts to begin to reconsider the basis of Japan's postwar identity. Whereas Japan's tremendous economic growth and its stunning resurrection in the postwar period had been the main basis for a reconstructed Japanese national identity, the prolonged recession and the rise of China began to raise questions about, and led some to begin to search for other bases of, Japan's national identity (Wan 2006: 163).

Another important factor in this phase was the advent of Japan's first Socialist prime minister in the postwar period. MURAYAMA Tomiichi took office on 30 June 1994 as the Prime Minister, heading a coalition government of the Japan Socialist Party, the Liberal Democratic Party and the New Party Sakigake. And while this coalition signaled the return of the LDP to power, following its brief period out of power during the previous year's coalition government headed by HOSOKAWA Morihiro, the fact that the prime minister was a Socialist had important implications for Japan's official narrative, as the Japan Socialist Party had long been committed to more openly and honestly addressing and coming to terms with Japan's aggression and actions in World War II. In particular, in the negotiations that led to the formation of this coalition, Murayama had demanded and the LDP had agreed that the Diet would mark the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war by passing a resolution apologizing for Japan's aggression (Kwan 1995).

In addition to these power shifts at the domestic and international levels, another notable factor was that the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war was on 15 August 1995.<sup>572</sup> While Phase Four had also included significant anniversaries, several factors contributed to the widespread perception among Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials and a number of politicians that for the fiftieth anniversary Japan should make a clear apology to the countries that had been victimized by its aggression. The most significant of these factors were: the changing nature of the relationship between China and Japan, Foreign Ministry officials' perception that the official narrative as it stood could be a hindrance to the international community's full acceptance of Japan as a major international player, and China's (and South Korea's) increasing dissatisfaction with the official narrative and with high-level officials' increasing tendency to deny basic facts in prominent 'gaffes.'

And yet, militating against these factors was the fact that the influence of right-wing interest groups was at the same time *increasing* within the LDP. While groups like the Japan Association of War-bereaved Families and the Association of Shinto Shrines had long been influential within the LDP in general, among more conservative and nationalist politicians in particular, and within certain ministries (especially the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Welfare), their influence increased in the latter half of the 1990s. A central driver of their increasing influence was the reform of electoral and campaign donation laws in 1994. As the restrictions on politicians' campaign fund-raising were further tightened, the influence of interest groups that could bring attention to individual politicians and get out the vote in individual voting districts was heightened. One interviewee emphasized this point, arguing that the campaign finance reforms in the 1990s increased particularly the influence of right-wing groups such as the Japan Association of War-bereaved Families.<sup>573</sup> Moreover, this development was exacerbated by the economic recession in the 1990s, which reduced campaign donations from the general public and made politicians more reliant on donations and help from those interest groups that continued to support them (Kattoulas 2001).

Finally, China's patriotic education policies, which were begun in the wake of the Tiananmen Square massacre, continued. The impact of these policies, which highlighted Chinese victimization throughout the twentieth century and particularly at the hands of the Japanese during the fifteen-year-long Second Sino-Japanese War, led Chinese activists to begin to agitate for compensation and greater contrition from Japan. And while Chinese authorities were more or less successful in containing this activism in this phase, these activities increased the pressure on Japanese officials for compensation and for a formal statement of apology.

### *Independent variables*

In this phase China and South Korea protested Japanese officials' so-called 'gaffes,' revisionists' efforts to reduce the coverage of Japan's war crimes in Japan's school textbooks, and other official and unofficial statements and actions that indicated a failure to accept full responsibility and apologize for Japan's war crimes. As a result, Japanese officials – especially in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – decided that a broad official apology that went further than Hosokawa's

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<sup>572</sup> This phase also included other war-related anniversaries, most notably the fiftieth anniversaries of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August 1995.

<sup>573</sup> Author's interview with political analyst [J-1], Tokyo, July 2008.

statements might reduce the potential for ‘history issues’ to more seriously impact Japan’s foreign relations.

In addition, the efforts of progressive activists in Japan and of transnational activists led directly to the issuance of the first official statements that explicitly acknowledged the Nanjing Massacre and the Japanese military’s involvement in the event. But, the continued mobilization of revisionists and nationalists in Japan actively constrained the extent of change that resulted in this phase.

### A nationalist revisionist movement takes shape in Japan

The nationalist revisionist movement arose in response to several shifts in the official narrative in the early 1990s, namely: the government’s admissions of and apologies in 1992 and 1993 for its involvement in the “comfort women” system, Prime Minister Hosokawa’s statements in 1993 that the war was one of “aggression” and “a mistake,” and the growing indications of a political consensus among many national politicians that Japan should issue a formal apology to the victims of its war-related actions on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war in 1995. One interviewee emphasized that this current phase of revisionism began to emerge because conservatives felt that these statements posed a serious threat to Japanese national identity.<sup>574</sup>

Within the Diet, the first signs of this movement were in the previous phase, in direct response to Prime Minister Hosokawa’s statements. As mentioned above, more than 100 LDP Diet members – including a number of the most prominent leaders in the LDP – formed a group called the Committee to Examine History in August 1993.<sup>575</sup> This group organized panel discussions and invited scholars and others to give talks about various aspects of contested historical issues, such as the Nanjing Massacre and the “comfort women” system (Saaler 2005: 77-80). In August 1995, as a culmination of the groups’ activities, it published a book called the *Summary of the Greater East Asia War (Daito-A senso sokatsu)* which, Caroline Rose writes, “had four main points: that the Greater East Asia War (GEAW) was one of self-defence and liberation; that the Nanjing Massacre and stories about comfort women were fabrications; that a new textbook battle was necessary in light of the emphasis on damage and invasion in recent textbooks; and that a national movement was needed to disseminate the historical view put forward in the first two points” (2005: 53). In addition, two other Diet committees were formed in the subsequent two years, both of which focused on history issues and had the goal of opposing moves to issue a formal apology for the war. In December 1994 the Diet Members League for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of the War was established with over 200 LDP members. Its “declared goal was to revise the ‘masochistic understanding’ of wartime and prewar Japanese history ‘initiated by the American occupation policy as well as left-wing forces in Japan’” (Yoshida 2006b: 141). In February 1995, a similar group – the Diet Members League for the Passing on of a Correct History – was formed by members of the New Frontier Party (*Shinshintō*).<sup>576</sup>

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<sup>574</sup> Author’s interview with journalist at *Asahi Shimbun* [J-12], Tokyo, July 2008.

<sup>575</sup> Among the most prominent members of this group were “the future prime ministers Hashimoto Ryutaro, Mori Yoshiro, and Abe Shinzo” (Nozaki 2008: 142) and a number of others.

<sup>576</sup> On both groups, see McCormack (2000: 56) and Yoshida (2006b: 141).

Mirroring the establishment of these Diet leagues, a societal group was established under the coordinated leadership of two prominent interest groups – the Japan Association of War-bereaved Families and the National Conference to Defend Japan (*Nihon-o mamoru kokumin kaigi*) – and with the goal of opposing the apology resolution proposed by the coalition government. Called the National Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of World War II, the group focused on gathering signatures on a national petition that opposed the proposed apology resolution, and on putting pressure on Diet members (in public and behind the scenes) to vote against the apology resolution. According to Yoshida, the committee “collected more than 5 million signatures opposing the 1995 Diet resolution” (2006b: 142), and Wakamiya emphasizes the influence of the committee and the interest groups behind it in generating opposition within the Diet to an apology resolution (1998: 20, 22). Together, the petition campaign mounted by this committee, the political pressure put on individual candidates by the *Nihon Izokukai* in particular, and the organized opposition within the LDP and in the opposition New Frontier Party, resulted in a watered-down resolution that was barely passed by the Diet in June 1995 (which is further discussed below.)

Related to and in part growing out of this nationalist mobilization, the so-called third textbook offensive began in mid-1996, when it was revealed that *all* of the junior high school history textbooks that had been approved by the Ministry of Education for use in the following year would include references to the “comfort women” program. In a first sign of nationalists’ response, in early 1995 the University of Tokyo education professor FUJIOKA Nobukatsu established the Association for the Advancement of a Liberalist View of History (*Jiyushugi Shikan Kenkyukai*) (Yoshida 2006b: 142). Initially, the Association’s and Fujioka’s focus was on schoolteachers, and on changing the way in which Japanese history was taught in classrooms.<sup>577</sup> However, following the Ministry of Education’s announcement of the new junior high school textbooks, and the subsequent discovery of their coverage of the “comfort women” issue, Fujioka and another nationalist academic, NISHIO Kanji, joined together to establish the Society for the Creation of New History Textbooks (*Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho o Tsukurukai*, or *Tsukurukai* for short). *Tsukurukai* was strongly supported by the powerful umbrella organization, the National Conference to Defend Japan,<sup>578</sup> and it developed ties with prominent nationalists in the political and cultural realms.<sup>579</sup> These revisionists argued that Japanese students should be

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<sup>577</sup> Author’s interview with revisionist textbook activist [J-7], Tokyo, July 2008.

<sup>578</sup> In 1997, the National Conference to Defend Japan merged with another conservative group, the Association to Defend Japan (*Nihon wo mamoru kai*), and formed the Japan Conference (*Nippon kaigi*), which is one of the most powerful conservative political groups in Japan today, and which strongly and influentially supported revisionist textbook efforts in the late 1990s (Saaler 2005). While *Tsukurukai* and the National Conference to Defend Japan/Japan Conference did not have formal ties, representatives of both *Tsukurukai* and the Japan Conference acknowledge that the two organizations have ‘worked together’ on the textbook issue (Author’s interview with revisionist textbook activist [J-7], Tokyo, July 2008; Author’s interview with a representative of Japan Conference [J-6], Tokyo, July 2008.) Moreover, many scholars and journalists highlight Japan Conference’s support for *Tsukurukai* (e.g., Ho 2005a), which is the most likely explanation for the outsized political influence of the latter in the late 1990s.

<sup>579</sup> Most notably, “the society [i.e., *Tsukurukai*] ... recruited the manga [i.e., comic book] author Yoshinori Kobayashi who, in 1998, came out with a top-selling retelling of Japan’s role in the war in comic book form. His 400-page *Analects of War* (*Senso ron*) argued that the war must be retold positively so that the young could re-acquire a sense of national pride. It provoked a huge public debate about Japan’s war-time record” (Ho 2005a). Moreover, the historian Roger Jeans notes that “it was clear the society [i.e., *Tsukurukai*] had powerful friends. In

taught about individuals and events in Japanese history in whom they could take pride. For example, a newspaper article from early 1997 quoted Fujioka, who declared: “‘If the Japanese do not learn of a history that they can be proud of, they will lose their national identity, leading to the spiritual breakdown of Japan’” (*The Straits Times* 1997). Another article reported that advocates of textbook revision argued that the textbooks approved by the ministry for use in 1997 were “anti-Japanese” and that they “‘could undermine children’s faith in their country’” (Donnet 1997).

At the same time, Diet members in the LDP and in the New Frontier Party mobilized and formed separate leagues focused specifically on the revision of history textbooks (Rose 2005: 59).<sup>580</sup> Echoing the rationale of *Tsukurukai* and its allies, in early 1997, the former education minister and LDP Diet member SHIMAMURA Yoshinobu stated: “‘We need to seek ways how we can restore our glorious history, tradition and pride’” (Yamaguchi 1997). Led by *Tsukurukai*’s well-publicized efforts to reverse the trend of increasing coverage of Japan’s war crimes in textbooks, this revisionist movement had a significant impact on the content of the narrative in history textbooks, although primarily in the next phase, since there is a lag of at least a couple of years due to the time required to write, review, approve and select a textbook for use in schools.

Finally, this phase saw the continuation and increased frequency of so-called ‘gaffes.’ On several occasions, high-level national politicians made public statements proposing more positive assessments of Japan’s actions in the war. For example, in August 1994, the cabinet minister SAKURAI Shin declared in a press conference: “‘I don’t think Japan fought with the aim of waging a war of aggression’” and “‘I don’t think we should take the position that Japan was the only one that was wrong’” (*Agence France-Presse* 1994). Highlighting the connection between the move toward greater contrition in the official narrative and the issuance of these revisionist statements, “‘Sakurai’s statements ... came at a press conference immediately after a Cabinet meeting, called to discuss a proposed 10-year, \$A1.3 billion, plan to compensate victims of Japan’s aggression, including thousands of ‘comfort women’ who were forced to work in military brothels’” (Hills 1994c). Similarly, in October 1994, another Cabinet minister and a future prime minister, HASHIMOTO Ryutaro, demurred in answering a question about whether Japan had fought a war of aggression, saying: “‘Whether Japan actually launched a war of aggression against its neighbours in Asia is a delicate question of definition,’ and ‘it is still questionable whether the war Japan launched in those years was a war of aggression’” (*BBC Monitoring Service: Asia-Pacific* 1996). While Sakurai was forced to retract his statements and resign by Prime Minister Murayama, the powerful Hashimoto only apologized (Dawkins and Cramb 1995), and his remarks were carefully qualified with a statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary that: “‘We are aware that the acts of aggression and colonial rule we committed at one time in the past not only sacrificed many Japanese but were inflicted on many people among our Asian neighbours’” (*Reuters News* 1994b). And in 1995 the Education Minister SHIMAMURA Yoshinobu was also not forced to resign – although he did apologize – for his remarks that “‘it makes little sense to keep harping on the past and apologizing for one particular incident after another’” (Wakamiya 1998: 13) and “‘whether Japan pursued a war of aggression depended on ‘how you think about it’” (Ishimura 1995). As a result, these statements – especially their

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Japan, that also meant it was well funded. In 2000, for example, it was reported the group raised 415 million yen (\$332,000)” (2005: 186).

<sup>580</sup> Author’s interview with revisionist textbook activist [J-7], Tokyo, July 2008.



increasing frequency and particular timing – were testaments to the increasing feelings of disquiet over and resistance among some high-level conservative politicians to the changes in the official narrative in the early and mid-1990s.

### Reactions to and in response to this revisionist movement

While this broad revisionist movement developed, in the mid-1990s domestic and international groups also mobilized in response to it. On this point, Caroline Rose observes that “the 1990s saw tremendous growth in the number of organisations, led by academics, teachers, journalists, and union members, which launched a systematic and sustained counter-attack on what they saw as a dangerous and regressive trend in history education and historiography” (2005: 61). Thus, in contrast to the weak Diet resolution passed in June 1995 (see below), the mayors of both Nagasaki and Hiroshima, on the respective anniversaries of their cities’ atomic bombings, apologized in their commemorative speeches “to the countries that suffered under Japan’s aggression” (Kishimoto 2004: 25).<sup>581</sup> Moreover, leftist groups within Japan began to mobilize in opposition to *Tsukurukai* et al.’s efforts to reverse the trend toward greater textbook coverage of the Nanjing Massacre, the “comfort women” program, and other aspects of Japan’s WWII-era crimes. One of the groups that led the grassroots progressive opposition to this revisionist textbook movement was Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21 (*Kodomo to kyōkasho zenkoku netto 21*, which is often abbreviated as *Netto 21*), which was founded in June 1998 by some of the activists who had been most involved in IENAGA Saburo’s support organization.<sup>582</sup> In collaboration with a network of grassroots organizations throughout Japan, *Netto 21* took action to (successfully) persuade school boards (in 2001) not to choose to use the textbook that had been written by *Tsukurukai*.

Japanese lawyers also started working on wartime compensation cases for non-Japanese victims of Japan’s war crimes. In the wake of the Justice Minister Nagano’s revisionist comments in May 1994, a group of lawyers from the Japan Democratic Lawyers’ Association started to look into war crimes committed by Japan in China. From their initial investigation and interviews with surviving Chinese victims, which was arranged at the prompting and with the help of a Chinese journalist, these Japanese lawyers decided to help Chinese war victims seek compensation. Importantly, however, they did not start bringing cases on behalf of these victims until *after* the Chinese government signaled that it would allow Chinese war victims to pursue individual compensation from the Japanese government.<sup>583</sup> The lawyers did not have to wait long, however, since in March 1995, the Chinese Foreign Minister QIAN Qichen announced that Chinese war victims would be permitted to make individual claims for compensation against the Japanese government (Tan 1995; He 2007: 10). Importantly, this policy change occurred as organized opposition to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Diet resolution was clearly building in Japan, so it might have been an attempt by Chinese officials to put pressure on Japanese officials and politicians to stick to the announced plan to issue a formal apology.

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<sup>581</sup> See Ishimura 1995 for excerpts of each mayor’s statement.

<sup>582</sup> Author’s interview with leftist textbook activist [J-5], Tokyo, July 2008.

<sup>583</sup> This was because the Japanese lawyers were worried that if they helped the Chinese war victims sue the Japanese government, that this might provoke political problems between Japan and China, which in turn might lead the Chinese government to crack down on the Chinese war victims who were seeking compensation in Japanese courts, thereby resulting in a *worse* situation for the Chinese war victims. (Much of the information in this and the next paragraph is from: Author’s interview (anonymous) [J-8], Tokyo, July 2008.)

Following this decision, these Japanese lawyers began to help Chinese victims file lawsuits seeking compensation from the Japanese government and Japanese firms for their suffering (or the suffering of their family members) during the war. Beginning in 1995 and over the course of the subsequent decade, the 300+ lawyers in the Lawyers Team for Chinese War Victims Demanding Compensation helped file at least “twenty-six cases involving Chinese forced laborers, victims of war atrocities, and comfort women” (Wan 2006: 315). These lawyers worked pro bono, and their efforts were aided by a support organization that they established to promote and publicize the cases in Japan, and to help the Chinese victims, especially when they went to Japan to testify or appear in hearings.<sup>584</sup> The historian Takashi YOSHIDA notes that, “although these lawyers obviously hope to recover damages for their clients, they also wish the Japanese government to formally acknowledge the nation’s responsibility for the alleged crimes” (2006a: 3). And while these court cases have not had a huge direct impact on Japan’s official narrative, one interviewee argued that these cases have did have an indirect impact: the courts have affirmed all of the historical facts brought up in the cases, and they have further found that the conduct of the Japanese Imperial army in WWII was illegal.<sup>585</sup> (This is in spite of the fact that, in almost all of the cases, the plaintiffs claiming compensation have lost.)

Related to these lawyers’ efforts, court rulings in IENAGA Saburo’s third lawsuit against the Ministry of Education recognized the Nanjing Massacre as an historical event (Crabb 1993), first in a decision by the Tokyo District Court in 1993 and then in a decision by the Supreme Court in 1997. The first ruling found that “ministry censors illegally ordered Ienaga to insert words to the effect that the massacre occurred ‘amidst confusion’, suggesting the army as an institution was not to blame. The ruling said censors unlawfully instructed Ienaga to delete reference to soldiers committing wholesale rape” (Yvonne Chang 1997). In 1997, the Supreme Court also affirmed the existence of Unit 731, which was the most notorious of the units that conducted ‘medical’ and biological experiments on Chinese and other victims. This ruling was the first time that this program’s existence had been recognized by the Japanese government. The ruling stated: “‘While ‘Unit 731’ has not been revealed in its entirety, the existence of such a unit within the Japanese Imperial Army with the purpose of conducting germ warfare, and that the unit conducted live experiments on many Chinese and others, was accepted by the academia at the time’ ... ‘Hence it was unlawful (for the Education Ministry) to order the deletion of the passage from the textbook’” (Yvonne Chang 1997a).

And while the *direct* impact of these cases on the official narrative has been limited, over the longer term these cases have had an impact on the information that is available within the public sphere in Japan. Moreover, as courts have confirmed various events and programs as historical facts, textbook publishers and authors have had a stronger basis for including them in the textbooks that they prepared and submitted for approval to the Ministry of Education. This is particularly so given the Ministry’s strategy of excluding or at least minimizing coverage of Japan’s war-related crimes by demanding that authors need to cite scholarship and evidence that firmly establishes the events and details as facts. As a result, these rulings contributed to the

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<sup>584</sup> Author’s interview (anonymous) [J-8], Tokyo, July 2008; Author’s interview with leftist activist [J-15], Tokyo, July 2008; Author’s interview with leftist activist [J-16], Tokyo, July 2008. On this support organization, see also: Yoshida 2006b: 134.

<sup>585</sup> Author’s interview (anonymous) [J-8], Tokyo, July 2008.

increasing coverage of war-related crimes – especially the Nanjing Massacre and the “comfort women” program – in textbooks throughout the 1990s.

Finally, this phase also marked the fuller emergence of the transnational movement to pressure Japan to apologize for and more fully acknowledge its WWII-era crimes. Led by a group of Chinese-American activists in California, the Global Alliance for Preserving the History of World War II organized academic conferences and exhibits on the Nanjing Massacre and other aspects of Japan’s war crimes, and supported efforts to bring lawsuits seeking compensation for victims of Japanese atrocities in courts in the US and elsewhere. Within the United States, their efforts were evidenced at the federal governmental level in two consequential developments. In December 1996, the US Justice Department’s Office of Special Investigations announced that the names of sixteen Japanese war criminals had been added to its ‘watch list’ of war criminals who were not allowed to enter the United States. While this list had existed since 1979, and included the names of more than 60,000 Nazi war criminals, this was the first time any Japanese war criminals were added to the list (Hicks 1997: vii; Triplett 1997). Moreover, in July 1997, a resolution calling on Japan to apologize and pay reparations for its war crimes was proposed in the US House of Representatives (Yamazaki 2006: 130), and later died in a House subcommittee (*Joins.com* 1997). While such resolutions had been an important form of international pressure on Turkey since the mid-1970s, this was the first such resolution addressing Japanese crimes that was proposed in the US Congress.<sup>586</sup> Moreover, these steps were causes for concern for Japanese officials, because they introduced a new source of international pressure, and one which came from its closest ally. That said, as in the Turkish case, the US State Department has actively resisted (albeit behind the scenes) efforts in the US to put pressure on Japan regarding its war crimes (e.g., Triplett 1997).

The most significant outcome of this activism, however, was the publication in 1997 – the sixtieth anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre – of what was billed as the first non-fiction account of the Nanjing Massacre in English. The book was written by the Chinese-American journalist Iris Chang, and it was titled *The Rape of Nanjing: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*. This book was a bestseller in the United States (Yang 1999: 843), and gained tremendous attention in China and in Japan. Chang had been inspired to write the book after seeing an exhibit on the Nanjing Massacre that had been organized by the Alliance for Preserving the History of World War II in Asia (Chea 2005; Yoshida 2006b: 171), and the Alliance then helped widely publicize the book (Workman 1999). This book was important in several respects. First, it led directly to Japanese officials’ explicit acknowledgement of the factuality of the Nanjing Massacre and the Japanese military’s involvement in the massacre, which is discussed in the next section (below.) Second, this book prompted a widespread debate about the book and the massacre within Japan. Unfortunately, however, the book was found to have numerous factual errors, which provided ammunition for revisionists in Japan to use as ‘evidence’ for their claim that the entire massacre was a ‘fabrication’ and a ‘lie’ (Yoshida 2006b: 146). Third, the book

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<sup>586</sup> According to a news report at the time, “The draft resolution ... criticizes the defunct Japanese Imperial Army for conducting a death march of U.S. POWs in the Bataan Peninsula of the Philippines, the Nanjing Massacre and experiments of biochemical weapons on live prisoners before or during World War II. ... The draft resolution urges Japan to officially apologize for the war crimes and immediately pay compensations to former U.S. military and civilians POWs and their families. It also calls for the establishment of a fund to make compensations to victims of the Nanjing Massacre and former ‘comfort women’ for the Japanese military” (*Jiji Press* 1997).

brought public and academic attention in the United States to the event, which had previously been relatively unknown and unstudied (Yoshida 2006b: 172-3, 179), and further stoked the growing activist movement in the United States (Chea 2005; Dao 1998).

Finally, before moving on, I want to note two features of this activist movement. First, while the movement first emerged among Chinese-Americans in California, within several years it had expanded to include at least thirty non-governmental organizations under the umbrella of the Global Alliance, some of which were located outside the United States. Second, there have been a number of connections between this movement for redress and apology from Japan, and more established groups that have worked to maintain the memory of the Holocaust and to bring to justice those guilty of involvement in the Holocaust. For example, one newspaper article in 1999 noted that “Jewish lawyers engaged in prosecuting German companies have also been active in lawsuits against Japanese companies” (Ishii 1999), while the Simon Weisenthal Center hosted a panel discussion focused on Japanese atrocities and was involved in other activities (McGill and Akagawa 1998; Dobbs 2000). Moreover, lawyers and activists involved in the Japanese war crimes redress movement – both in the US and in Japan – borrowed inspiration and ideas from Jewish groups’ successful efforts to preserve the memory of the Holocaust and to push for compensation for Holocaust victims from firms and governments.<sup>587</sup>

### *The dependent variable*

Consistent with the change indicated, official statements in this phase included the word apology (*owabi*), and some tentative steps to back up such words with actions.

#### Toward an official apology

The coalition government headed by Japan’s first Socialist prime minister, MURAYAMA Tomiichi, took office on 30 June 1994. As mentioned above, as part of the negotiations to form the government, the three parties in the coalition agreed to pass a parliamentary resolution on the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war “to repent Japan’s past military actions and to declare that it will never again invade its neighbours” (Kwan 1995). While the most significant changes in the official narrative came in 1995, signs of the changes to come were evident in 1994.

Within a month of taking office, Murayama announced that the Japanese government would launch a “Peace, Friendship, and Exchange Initiative” in 1995 to mark the anniversary of the end of the war. The initiative involved spending over a billion dollars in a multi-year period, with its primary foci being “to support historical research” and “exchange programs to promote dialogue and mutual understanding.”<sup>588</sup> In announcing this initiative, Murayama reiterated the government’s recent recognition of and apology for its involvement in the “comfort women” program, and offered his own “profound and sincere remorse and apologies” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1994). In addition, he began the speech thus:

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<sup>587</sup> For examples of this, see: Iris Chang 1998; *The Times of India* 2000; McLaughlin 1993.

<sup>588</sup> These quotes are taken from the official English translation of Murayama’s speech announcing the initiative (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1994).

“Japan’s actions in a certain period of the past not only claimed numerous victims here in Japan but also left the peoples of neighboring Asia and elsewhere with scars that are painful even today. I am thus taking this opportunity to state my belief, based on my profound remorse for these acts of aggression, colonial rule, and the like caused such unbearable suffering and sorrow for so many people, that Japan’s future path should be one of making every effort to build world peace in line with my no-war commitment. It is imperative for us Japanese to look squarely to our history with the peoples of neighboring Asia and elsewhere. Only with solid basis of mutual understanding and confidence that can be build [sic] through overcoming the pain on both sides, can we and the peoples of neighboring countries together clear up the future of Asia-Pacific. With next year’s historic 50th anniversary of the war’s end, I believe it is necessary that such views are solidified and that we redouble our efforts for peace” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1994).

While this statement did not advance the content of the official narrative, with the benefit of hindsight, the last sentence might be taken to signal the changes that would come the following year. In addition, this initiative highlighted a longstanding aspect of Japan’s narrative that would not change in this phase: the refusal of the Japanese government to pay compensation to individual, non-Japanese victims of Japanese war crimes. Thus, the planned policies mentioned in this speech focused on developing and enhancing “mutual understanding” between Japan and “the peoples of neighboring Asia and elsewhere,” but the speech and the proposed initiative conspicuously avoided mention of compensating actual victims of Japan’s actions.

Several months later, in May 1995, as the domestic debate over the proposed Diet resolution was in full swing, Murayama visited the Marco Polo Bridge, which was the first visit by a Japanese prime minister to the site of the ‘incident’ that officially started the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 (Mufson 1995). While this was a symbolically important visit, Murayama did not offer an apology to China at the time,<sup>589</sup> which analysts interpreted as an attempt to balance Murayama’s and his party’s inclinations with the demands of those on the political right within Japan (Eckert 1995; Howell 1997: 84-5).

A month later, the Diet finally passed the much-debated “Resolution to Renew the Determination for Peace on the Basis of lessons Learned from History,” in observation of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war. Unfortunately, the resolution did not satisfy any of its advocates (Benfell 2002), and did not meet the goals that had motivated efforts to pass the resolution, which had initially been intended as “a formal apology to neighboring countries for Japan’s wartime conduct” (Masumi 1995: 419).<sup>590</sup> However, due to the intense opposition described above, the resolution ended up expressing ‘deep remorse,’ but it did not offer an apology. A range of politicians and nationalist groups vehemently opposed the issuance of an apology, arguing that doing so would “desecrate the honor of Japanese soldiers killed in action,” “erode pride in the nation among youths,” affirm “the distorted interpretation of history that has prevailed in the postwar period,” “become an obstacle to Japan’s future,” and “mean that the

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<sup>589</sup> “After visiting the site, ... Murayama stated, ‘I recognize anew that Japan’s actions at one time in our past history, including aggression and colonial rule, caused unbearable suffering and sorrow for many people in your country and other Asian neighbors’” (Howell 1997: 84-5).

<sup>590</sup> The resolution had originally been named the “Diet Resolution of Remorse and Apology” (Yamazaki 2006: 93).

Japanese would be eternally labeled a cruel and inhuman people.”<sup>591</sup> Moreover, aside from claims that a government apology would insult the memory of the war dead and undercut Japanese identity, many conservative politicians had a strong material incentive to oppose an apology resolution: “the JBFA [*Nihon Izokukai*] threatened to withdraw electoral support from conservative politicians who supported (or even refused to oppose) the resolution” (Benfell 2002).<sup>592</sup>

Thus, the final text of the resolution actually relativized Japan’s actions in the war by situating Japan’s actions within the context of other countries’ “colonial rule and acts.”<sup>593</sup> The key part of the “Resolution to Renew the Determination for Peace on the Basis of lessons Learned from History” reads: “Solemnly reflecting upon many instances of colonial rule and acts of aggression in the modern history of the world, and recognizing that Japan carried out those acts in the past, inflicting pain and suffering upon the peoples of other countries, especially in Asia, the Members of this House express a sense of deep remorse” (Barnard 2003: 5). Yamazaki writes that, “by enlarging the scope, by introducing the much larger scene of international wrongdoing, the resolution attempts to dwarf the wrongdoing of Japan” (2006: 94). Moreover, Wakamiya notes that the use of the phrase “acts of aggression,” rather than the unqualified term “aggression” that Hosokawa had used in 1993, “was clearly a step backward” (1998: 180). Crucially, this perception was shared by Chinese officials. Thus, when KAIFU Toshiki visited China at the end of June and asked the Chinese leader JIANG Zemin if China would support Japan in its bid for a permanent seat on an expanded UN Security Council, China’s displeasure with the Diet resolution was evident in Jiang’s response. He responded that

“the idea was ‘complicated by Japanese perceptions of the war,’ and went on: ‘We understand that some Japanese feel guilty and genuinely sorry for the crimes committed by Japan’s militarists in the past. But it’s also true that others have erroneous perceptions of the damage inflicted on Asia and China in World War II. You should learn from the proverb: ‘The front wheels set an example for the rear wheels.’ When it comes to perceptions of the war, the Germans have shown how to win credibility’” (Wakamiya 1998: 26).

In addition to the Diet resolution, in July 1995, the Japanese government announced that it was setting up the Asian Women’s Fund, to compensate surviving former “comfort women.” While

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<sup>591</sup> The first two statements were made by the LDP politician OKUNO Seisuke, who stated: “‘Japan should no longer apologize for the war. . . . Adoption of such a resolution would not only desecrate the honor of Japanese soldiers killed in action but also erode pride in the nation among youths’” (Seraphim 2006: 277). The third and fourth statements were part of a statement issued by the LDP Diet members’ league that opposed the resolution, which is quoted in Masumi (1995: 423): “In its prospectus, the LDP league emphatically stated: ‘If an apology resolution renouncing war were to be passed by the Diet, it would mean affirmation of the distorted interpretation of history that has prevailed in the postwar period and would become an obstacle to Japan’s future.’” And finally, the last point was part of a statement issued by the New Frontier Party Diet members’ league that opposed the resolution, which was also quoted in Masumi (1995: 423): “The NFP’s action plan said: ‘Making an apology now, despite the fact that Japan has already apologized in the form of reparations, would be tantamount to trampling on the efforts and the honor of our predecessors and would mean that the Japanese would be eternally labeled a cruel and inhuman people.’”

<sup>592</sup> Masumi (1995: 423) confirms this point.

<sup>593</sup> Moreover, in contrast to the norm for Diet resolutions, this resolution was *not* approved by a unanimous vote, and it was only voted on by one house of the Diet (Mukae 1996).

the Fund offered monetary compensation and a letter of heartfelt apology signed by the Japanese Prime Minister to surviving comfort women (Yamazaki 2006: 67-8), it was widely criticized because it was made explicit that the compensation should not be considered as reparations or individual compensation from the Japanese government (Rose 2005: 71). Thus, the government contributed ¥500 million to the fund, but the rest of the fund's money was supposed to come from private donations from Japanese citizens and firms. This arrangement was a reflection of Japanese officials' reluctance to compensate *individual* victims of Japan's war crimes.

In 1995 the Japanese government also announced plans to establish a Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (*Aija rekishi shiryō sentaa*), which was opened in 2001 (Jeans 2005: 162). This center was intended by Prime Minister Murayama as an alternative to the Showa Hall museum, which was planned to commemorate the war and had been in the works for years. Showa Hall had originally been proposed by the Japan Association of War-Bereaved Families to the Ministry of Health and Welfare in 1979 (Jeans 2005: 158), and by 1995 it was mired in controversy. While *Nihon Izokukai* envisioned the museum as ““memorial hall for the war dead”” (*Ibid.*: 159) that would “focus on the sufferings of Japanese civilians and soldiers in the war” (*Ibid.*: 158), critics of the planned museum argued that the plans for the museum would present a “one-sided” and “unbalanced” impression of Japan's role in the war” (*Ibid.*: 159). The Ministry of Health and Welfare, which was in charge of the project, seemed to have sympathized with the former group, and attempted to skirt the political problem of having to decide which ‘view’ to present in the museum by deciding to focus on the mundane aspects of the day-to-day lives of Japanese civilians and soldiers during the war (*Ibid.*: 158-9). In contrast, the proposed Center for Asian and Historical Records was intended to “exhibit a more comprehensive history of the war than the Showa Hall and, most importantly, recognize the suffering caused by Japan during the war” (*Ibid.*: 162).

### Officially apologizing

The most significant step in this phase was the statement of heartfelt apology and acknowledgement that Murayama made on 15 August 1995 to mark “the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the war's end.” Moving beyond the ‘standard formulation’ that had been developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1991, and also beyond Hosokawa's statements in 1993, Murayama worked together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,<sup>594</sup> and with the approval of his cabinet,<sup>595</sup> came up with a new ‘standard formulation’ that included an explicit statement of apology (using the word *owabi*.) This apology statement was prompted by the sense among MFA officials and Prime Minister Murayama that the fiftieth anniversary was the

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<sup>594</sup> According to one interviewee, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was involved in the decision to craft a ‘new formulation’ and also in the process of crafting this statement (Author's interview with a former senior official of the Japanese Foreign Ministry [J-3], Tokyo, July 2008.)

<sup>595</sup> Rose writes that “although the [Murayama] statement was not representative of the Japanese government as a whole (as subsequent criticism from the LDP showed), Murayama nonetheless obtained a cabinet decision (*kakugi kettei*), a more binding procedure than a cabinet understanding (*kakugi ryokai*). In so doing, ‘he apparently wished his statement to be interpreted at home and abroad as the general will of the Japanese cabinet, which he hoped would politically bind future cabinets’ (Mukae 1996: 1029)” (2005: 103). Moreover, Wakamiya notes that “Kono Yohei, president of the conservative Liberal Democratic Party and deputy prime minister and foreign minister of the ruling coalition, expressed his strong support for Murayama's statement, which had received official approbation at a cabinet meeting” (1998: 28).

appropriate time to address the issue anew, and to fend off the growing clamor of calls for Japan to clearly apologize for its past wrongs. Moreover, one interviewee emphasized that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to draft this apology statement as a counter to the rightwing nationalist movement in the Diet. The MFA was afraid that the rightwing movement was threatening Japan's ability to continue to have good relations with its Asian neighbors.<sup>596</sup> The key part of his speech states:

“During a certain period in the not too distant past, Japan, following a mistaken national policy, advanced along the road to war, only to ensnare the Japanese people in a fateful crisis, and, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations. In the hope that no such mistake be made in the future, I regard, in a spirit of humility, these irrefutable facts of history, and express here once again my feelings of deep remorse and state my heartfelt apology. Allow me also to express my feelings of profound mourning for all victims, both at home and abroad, of that history.”<sup>597</sup>

The most important feature of the speech is the phrase ‘heartfelt apology.’ While Japanese officials had, in the prior few years, made statements of apology for the government’s involvement in the “comfort women” program, there had been no such official apology statement that concerned either the war as a whole or the full range of victims of Japan’s aggression in the war. Thus Murayama’s statement signaled a shift on both of these counts. Moreover, he expressed his “feelings of profound mourning for all victims, both at home and abroad, of that history.” In addition to the shifts in the content of the narrative effected by this speech, it is worth noting that Murayama repeated Hosokawa’s reference to the war as ‘mistaken,’ referring in this speech to the fact that Japan’s “following a mistaken national policy.” Since this seminal statement was made, it has been repeated by subsequent Prime Ministers and other high-level Japanese officials, and “the Japanese Foreign Ministry has repeatedly affirmed this speech as the official government statement on apology” (Yamazaki 2006: 109).

Unfortunately, the statement was not received as positively by all of those former victim states as Japanese officials might have hoped. Most notably, “China’s Foreign Ministry called the remarks ‘positive,’ but added, ‘Some people in Japanese society, including political circles, are still unable to adopt a correct attitude toward the history of that period’” (Desmond 1995). One way in which this ‘incorrect’ attitude continued to be exhibited by conservative and nationalist politicians was in official visits to the Yasukuni Shrine by Diet members and cabinet ministers.<sup>598</sup> Some politicians and cabinet ministers typically visited each year on the August 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war, but in 1995, on the same day that Prime Minister Murayama issued his apology, ten cabinet ministers and about sixty parliamentarians visited the shrine. Moreover, in 1996, the Prime Minister HASHIMOTO Ryutaro made the first visit to the shrine

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<sup>596</sup> Author’s interview with academic and leftist activist [J-14], Tokyo, July 2008.

<sup>597</sup> For the full text of the official English translation of this statement, see the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ website: “Statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama ‘On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the war’s end’ (15 August 1995),” at: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/pm/murayama/9508.html>, accessed on 19 July 2011.

<sup>598</sup> Another sign of ‘incorrect attitudes’ was the fact that the frequency of revisionist statements by high-level officials and politicians increased in this phase, and, as we have seen, only some of the cabinet ministers who made such statements were forced to resign in this phase, causing concern among Japan’s neighbors and former victims.



by a prime minister since Nakasone's 'official' visit on 15 August 1985 (Seaton 2007: 88-90; Saaler 2005: 196). And while Hashimoto's visit, which he insisted was a private one (Benfell 2002), was *not* made on August 15<sup>th</sup>, it elicited loud protests from officials in China, South Korea and elsewhere (Felix SOH 1996), along with popular protests in China (Ogawa 2000: 45). As a result, Hashimoto did not visit Yasukuni again in his term as Prime Minister.<sup>599</sup> And yet, while Hashimoto recognized the importance of bending to international demands on this symbolic issue, like his predecessors he also continued to balance such demands with those of domestic nationalist groups. Thus, when he visited northeastern China in 1997 on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the normalization of relations between China and Japan, Hashimoto explicitly avoided visiting the city of Nanjing. According to one report, "Beijing had tried to have Hashimoto visit the eastern city of Nanjing .... But Hashimoto is said to have rejected the idea, since an implicit act of contrition on such a major issue would incite a right wing backlash from within his own country" (Marshallsea 1997).

### Explicitly acknowledging the Nanjing Massacre

The last important change in the official narrative in this phase was the explicit acknowledgement of the Nanjing Massacre in several statements by Japanese officials.<sup>600</sup> Remarkably, while numerous official statements had acknowledged the suffering of China and the Chinese people due to Japan's past wrongs, while Japanese textbooks had included at least basic references to the Nanjing Massacre since the mid-1980s, and while Japan had officially accepted the verdict of the Tokyo Trials (at which twelve defendants were charged with murder, war crimes, and crimes against humanity for their roles in the Nanjing Massacre; and two were executed for failing to prevent the massacre<sup>601</sup>) in the San Francisco Treaty, until 1997 no official statement had explicitly acknowledged the event.

Thus in late 1997, on the sixtieth anniversary of the massacre, the Japanese Ambassador to China stated: "The Nanjing incident must be remembered clearly. We should not repeat such history" (Lee-Young 1997). And while this was a tepid statement, in 1998 Japanese officials recognized the Nanjing Massacre and Japanese responsibility for the harm suffered in the event more clearly. In response to criticisms in the international media and in the Chinese-American journalist Iris Chang's book, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States SAITO Kunihiro, rejected accusations that the Japanese government denied, covered up or refused to apologize for the Nanjing Massacre. He then asserted that "the Japanese government 'explicitly showed remorse for our past conduct' in a joint communique issued following the 1972 normalization of diplomatic ties between China and Japan. 'Since then, we have repeatedly offered apology, including that by then Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama in 1995'" (*Japan Economic Newswire* 1998). And while this assertion was decidedly oblique, several months later Saito participated in a television debate with Iris Chang, in which his acknowledgement of the massacre was slightly less shrouded. During the debate, he stated: "We do recognize a really unfortunate thing happened and acts of violence were committed by members of the Japanese military' in Nanjing." Saito also reiterated that the Japanese government had expressed remorse

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<sup>599</sup> This was particularly notable, given that Hashimoto had been the head of the Japan Association of War-Bereaved Families, and had in the past visited Yasukuni each year as a Diet member and as a cabinet minister.

<sup>600</sup> Kimura (2007: 332) also notes this shift.

<sup>601</sup> For a close discussion of the Tokyo Trial and the charges related to the Nanjing Massacre, see Brook 2001.

and apology to China (*Japan Economic Newswire* 1998b). This statement thus recognized the involvement of the Japanese military in the “acts of violence” that happened in Nanjing, but avoided acknowledging the scope of the event as a massacre, or acknowledging the responsibility of the government for its outcome. A few weeks later, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs went further, acknowledging both the fact that the event was a massacre, and that “Japanese troops” were the perpetrators of this massacre. On 25 December 1998 NUMATA Sadaaki, who was the spokesman for the Japanese Foreign Ministry, stated that “‘our historical perception remains unchanged ... about the fact the massacre of civilians occurred’” (*BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific – Political* 1998a); and that “‘The Japanese government believes it was an irrefutable fact that after entering Nanjing, the Japanese troops in those days killed non-combat personnel and committed robberies’” (*BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific – Political* 1998b). This last statement came in response to China’s diplomatic complaints over a Japanese civil court’s ruling in a libel case related to the Nanjing Massacre. Crucially, it is likely that this last statement had more directly and explicitly acknowledged the Nanjing Massacre because it was responding to pressure from China. In contrast, Saito’s comments had been in response to accusations and pressure from *activists*, who are less likely than victim states to directly influence change in official narratives.

#### Hitting the limits: No written apology statement

And yet, the limits of change in the official narrative were revealed in November 1998 during the visit of Chinese Premier JIANG Zemin to Japan.<sup>602</sup> In the month or so prior to Jiang’s visit, Japanese officials had given signals that they were considering making an official apology in writing when Jiang visited, particularly as Japan had made a written apology when the South Korean leader KIM Daejung had visited Japan in October of the same year.<sup>603</sup> However, the Japanese Foreign Ministry and Prime Minister balked. In particular, a significant factor influencing Obuchi’s decision not to issue a written apology to China was his concern that doing so would threaten the stability of his coalition government and his own position within the LDP, since many conservative Diet members strongly objected to this step. In addition, this incident highlighted differences in Japanese officials’ perceptions of China and South Korea, with one official noting that Japan had a larger historical debt to Korea from the several decades of Japan’s colonial rule of the Korean peninsula (Holland 1998), and with indications that officials were concerned that China would not stop reminding Japan about ‘history issues’ as an added source of leverage. Thus, despite intense pressure from China and last-minute negotiations between Chinese and Japanese officials prior to Jiang’s visit, Japanese officials in the end

<sup>602</sup> Importantly, Wakamiya notes that this “was the first visit to Japan of a Chinese head of state” (1998: 259).

<sup>603</sup> On 8 October 1998, Obuchi and Kim issued an official Joint Declaration that stated: “‘Reviewing bilateral relations between Japan and Korea in the present century, and recognizing with profound humility the historical fact that, for a time in the past, Japan by its colonial rule inflicted great damage and pain on the Korean people, Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo expressed deep remorse and most sincere apologies for this. President Kim Daejung in good faith accepted and appreciated Prime Minister Obuchi’s expression of his view of history and stated that the current time was such that the two nations are required now to live down the unhappy phase of their past history and to make their best efforts for reconciliation and for good neighborly and friendly relations’” (Wakamiya 1998: 257). Following Kim’s visit the Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman OKADA Masaki had stated that “‘China is to get the same kind of apology as South Korea got, in a joint declaration,’ .... [and] the basis for issuing an apology to China would be the verbal statement by then-Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama in 1995 .... ‘The Japanese government squarely sees its past history and at the same time is willing, through dialogue and cooperation, to build our future relationship’ with China, Okada said” (Snyder 1998).

refused to issue a written apology. Instead, Obuchi made a verbal statement of apology that copied Murayama's 1995 apology, but this was clearly signaled as a being somewhat less than a formal written apology. This turn of events, which Jiang and other Chinese officials had not expected, led to the souring of the visit, with Jiang repeatedly and insistently bringing up 'history issues' for the remainder of his visit (Wakamiya 1998: 259).

#### A final note: textbook coverage

Finally, mirroring the changes in the official narrative overall, textbook coverage of Japan's WWII atrocities also increased in this phase, with the Nanjing Massacre included in almost every junior high and high school history textbook (*Mainichi Daily News* 1998). Yoshida reports that "six out of seven junior history textbooks available in 1997 stated that the Japanese military killed between 100,000 and 200,000 Chinese during and after the Battle of Nanjing. Four of them also gave the Chinese official estimate of 300,000" (2006a: 4). Moreover, beyond the basic inclusion of the event, and the higher death toll estimates allowed by reviewers from the Ministry of Education,<sup>604</sup> textbooks in this phase also expressed stronger judgments of the event. For example, "a typical junior-high history text [in 1998] says the Japanese military committed 'hideous' actions in Nanjing and 'indiscriminately killed unarmed soldiers and civilians including the elderly, women and children'" (Amaha 1998). And there were further changes in textbooks' coverage of other aspects of Japan's war crimes in this phase. Reflecting the change in the content of official statements from 1993, one article noted that "'in 1995, a survey of the 12 most popular textbooks in Japanese schools showed they agreed [that] Japan pursued a 'war of aggression.' ... They also included the [1937] Nanjing Massacre, as well as Japan's use of poison gas and slave labor'" (*The Wilson Quarterly* 2005, bracketed text in original). Finally, and most significantly, in 1994 the Ministry of Education announced that it would allow textbooks to note that "some of Japan's war compensation problems have not been resolved" (*Asian Political News Kyodo News International, Inc.* 1994).<sup>605</sup>

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<sup>604</sup> Amaha reports that an official from the Ministry of Education explained the changing review policies in 1998: "'The only thing we focus on when checking the Nanjing incident is the number of people who were killed,' says Junya Ishibashi, a ministry official. He says changes will be ordered 'if the number is too far off from the standard academic view.' Ishibashi declines to be specific about that number – but textbooks that refer to 'more than 100,000 deaths' have passed muster" (1998). Moreover, another newspaper article reports that "Almost all Japanese high school textbooks for world history and Japanese history mention the Nanjing massacre, and quite a few of them note that the death toll is 'estimated at 200,000 or above' and that 'the Chinese government believes that more than 300,000 people were killed'" (*Mainichi Daily News* 1998).

<sup>605</sup> Remarkably, "the ministry endorsed one textbook [for use in 1995] that says compensation demands from sufferers of Japanese aggression in World War II have not been settled at individual levels. The book also mentions the government's position that such issues have already been solved at the national level" (*Asian Political News Kyodo News International, Inc.* 1994).

### *Phase Six (1999 – 2008): The denouement: Attempting to break the spell of history*<sup>606</sup>

Phase Six of the official narrative began in 1999, and continued through the end of the period of study in 2008. In this phase, the narrative shifted one step to again include ‘mythmaking and/or relativizing’ as part of the narrative. As a result, the narrative covered five points along the continuum in this phase: mythmaking and/or relativizing the events, acknowledging the events, acknowledging harm and expressing regret, admitting responsibility and apologizing. Overall, the official narrative included frequent apologies, some of which went further than Prime Minister Murayama’s 1995 apology, alongside signals that the Japanese government was tiring of the perceived need to apologize repeatedly for its past actions. These contrary signals included decreased coverage of war crimes in Japanese textbooks, especially from 2000; increased resistance to international pressures to express greater contrition for Japan’s past actions; Prime Minister KOIZUMI Junichiro’s annual visits to the highly controversial Yasukuni Shrine; and the opening of the anodyne Showa Hall, which had been originally intended to commemorate the war dead, and ended up attempting to uncontroversially document the lives of ordinary Japanese on the home front during the war. Overall, this phase might be characterized as a denouement of sorts, from the high point of the official narrative in the previous phase.

The main factor that reinforced continuity in the narrative – and pushed for change in the opposite direction from that in which the narrative had been trending – was the continued strengthening of the nationalist movement that began in the mid-1990s. However, while the locus of the nationalist movement in Phase Five was in societal interest groups that had strong connections to politicians in the Diet and had built a widespread grassroots support network, by Phase Six the locus of this movement had shifted to the Diet and the government itself. As a result, this movement was the key factor that shaped the change in the narrative in the direction of mythmaking and relativizing. Working against the pressures generated by this movement were two other factors: the escalating protests by Chinese and Korean officials, as well as by activists within those (and other) countries, and the mobilization of progressive activists in opposition to the advocates of revisionism within Japan. The escalating protests by China and South Korea drove the continued issuance of official apologies by Japanese officials in this phase, but did *not* have much of an impact on other indicators, most notably official visits to the Yasukuni Shrine and the content of textbooks. And while progressive activists’ efforts contributed to the limited adoption of the revisionist textbook that had been prepared by *Tsukurukai*, their efforts overall primarily contributed to the accumulation of knowledge and evidence of Japan’s aggression, but did not strongly impact the official narrative in this phase.

#### *The domestic and international structural context*

Two broad and interrelated contextual factors particularly framed the political dynamics that shaped the narrative in this phase: the continued ‘rise of China’ and the ongoing stasis in and *relative* decline of Japan’s economy. In concrete terms, the clearly shifting relative balance of

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<sup>606</sup> Caroline Rose reported that “a report produced in late 2002 by Prime Minister Koizumi’s ‘Task Force on Foreign Relations’ identified China as Japan’s top foreign policy concern in the immediate future .... With specific reference to the history problem, it stated that ‘it is important that both countries, while learning from history, must break the ‘spell of history’ (*rekishi no jubaku*) and build a future-oriented (*mirai shiko*) relationship’” (2005: 27).

power between China and Japan began to destabilize longstanding givens in Sino-Japanese relations. Highlighting China's waning economic dependence on Japan, a March 2005 article in the *China Daily* noted that "China now trades more with the European Union and the United States than it does with Japan, which had been China's largest trade partner for 11 consecutive years before 2003. In terms of foreign direct investment (FDI) in China, Japan was also replaced by the Republic of Korea for the first time in 2004, dropping from the third to the fourth in foreign investment here [i.e., in China]" (Zhou 2005). In addition, Wan points to the significance of these trends, writing that "China gained on Japan rapidly in trade volume, an area that has been a foundation of Japan's postwar power status, and surpassed it in 2004" (2006: 205). And yet, alongside these relative shifts in economic relations, trade between the two countries continued to deepen in this phase, "with trade volume amounting to US\$167.8 billion in 2004, an increase of 25.7 per cent compared with the previous year" (Zhou 2005), and Japanese businesses increasingly viewing China's economic growth as an opportunity rather than a threat (Dickie and Pilling 2005).

This trend led to two key shifts in Japan's policies toward China. First, beginning in 2002 Japan began to reduce the level of its official development assistance to China, which had been a key feature of its foreign policy toward China since relations were normalized in 1972, and had also been a largely tacit element of Japan's war responsibility policies vis-à-vis China. Second, and more troublingly, "in December [2004], Japan named China, alongside regional rogue North Korea, as a country that needed careful monitoring. ... Naming China as a security concern – defence officials insist it has not been deemed a 'threat' – breaks a long tradition of pretending that China posed no military problems" (Dickie and Pilling 2005). This shift, in particular, reflected the overall tenor of change in the relationship from the perspective of Japanese politicians and officials, who increasingly felt that the 'special relationship' with China should come to an end.

This fundamental shift attenuated the continuing crisis of Japanese identity, which was triggered by the end of the 'Japanese miracle' that began in 1990. In the first four decades of the postwar period, Japanese nationalism had been constructed around pride in the country's remarkable economic growth. As this underlying basis was undercut by developments in the 1990s, Japanese politicians and elites attempted to construct alternative bases for Japanese national identity. Notable among these attempts have been efforts by conservative politicians and societal groups to reclaim Japan's history and past as sources of 'pride.' There were many signs of these efforts in the previous phase, and further indications in this phase. For example, in a speech in late 2005, the leading LDP politician (and future prime minister) ABE Shinzo "suggested that if a country does not honor its war dead, it has lost its essence and the companies of such a country cannot be successful" (Wan 2006: 258). Similarly, Caroline Rose observes that "the Tsukuru kai's struggle is all about preserving the nation and the nation's history, on which there is no room for compromise" (2005: 68).

On the Chinese side, Japanese responses to the shift in the relative balance of power helped fuel the growth of an at-times virulent Chinese nationalism vis-à-vis Japan. Thus, as Japanese officials (and the Japanese public, to some extent) wearied of being continually pressed and expected to offer apologies for Japan's past wrongs, and particularly as signs of this so-called 'apology fatigue' undermined perceptions of the degree of sincerity and contrition of Japanese

officials, Chinese nationalists began to protest Japan's actions. The first notable sign of this nationalism was in early 2000, when Chinese hackers attacked a number of Japanese government websites, replacing their content with "messages accusing Japan of trying to whitewash its wartime past" (Parker 2000). This 'hacktivism' was in response to the Japanese government's refusal to intervene to stop a conference – whose main focus was to 'refute' the Nanjing Massacre – from being held at a public venue in Osaka. According to one article at the time, "extreme right-wing Chinese computer hackers said they had declared all-out war on Japanese websites and vowed to keep up the assault until Japan faced up to war-time atrocities" (*Agence France-Presse* 2000). This so-called 'internet nationalism' continued, and escalated in the summer of 2003 (Wan 2006: 252-3; Gries 2005). Then in April 2005 anti-Japanese sentiments erupted into massive street protests in many Chinese cities, violent attacks on Japanese businesses and stores in China, and angry protests outside the Japanese embassy in Beijing and the Japanese consulate in Shanghai (Edwards 2005).<sup>607</sup> These protests were organized against Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, and were fueled by anger over the Japanese Ministry of Education's approval of another textbook that had been prepared by *Tsukurukai* (Onishi 2005). This strand of Chinese nationalism has come to influence the positions that Chinese officials take in disputes related to history issues, constraining the degree of compromise that Chinese officials are able to take with Japan on these issues.<sup>608</sup> As Peter Hayes Gries argues, what is at stake for Chinese officials is their legitimacy in the eyes of these nationalists and the broader Chinese public, which has been socialized by years of anti-Japanese propaganda and by the narratives pushed in patriotic education policies (2005). As a result, this nationalism has contributed to a dangerous hardening of official positions on both sides of the Sino-Japanese relationship.

In addition, Japan's military policies and shifting rhetoric have put Chinese officials on guard. The most notable policy change in this phase was the Diet's 2003 passage of a law allowing the Japan Self-Defense Forces to deploy to Iraq to participate (albeit in an extremely limited manner) in the 'reconstruction' effort, which was the first time since the end of WWII that Japanese soldiers were sent into a live war zone. This was a seminal policy change,<sup>609</sup> and one that was perceived negatively by some observers and officials in China, as well as by progressives in Japan, since it was a significant step toward conservatives' long-cherished goal of revising the postwar Constitution to eliminate the 'unnatural' restrictions on Japan's military. In conjunction with this policy shift, the increasing frequency of high-level 'gaffes' and the signs of backtracking in the official narrative somewhat heightened external threat perceptions of Japan (Lind 2008: 167).

Finally, two shifts within Japan's domestic political sphere contributed to the signs of retrenchment and 'apology fatigue' exhibited by leading Japanese politicians and officials in this phase. One was the decline in the power of the left in Japanese politics, particularly in the mid-to late-1990s. Given that the Japan Socialist Party (later the Social Democratic Party of Japan)

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<sup>607</sup> There were also emotional and angry protests in South Korea, and they had a somewhat similar effect on the South Korean government's position vis-à-vis Japan in relation to 'history issues.'

<sup>608</sup> Ming WAN notes that "this societal reaction [i.e., this anti-Japanese nationalism in China] has made it even more difficult for the Chinese government to compromise on the Yasukuni issue" (2006: 252-3).

<sup>609</sup> One interviewee emphasized that the radical nature of this change, and its import for Japanese politics and society, were huge (Author's interview with *New York Times* journalist [J-2], Tokyo, July 2008.)

and the Japan Communist Party had both pushed for greater contrition and for improving relations with China, their decreasing relevance in national politics (especially the former's) meant that there was no strong and clear voice to effectively argue against the increasingly visible and powerful revisionists in this phase. Moreover, a group of nationalists (particularly from the Mori faction) became the dominant voices and leading figures in the Liberal Democratic Party in this phase (Fujiwara 2005). In particular, a series of politicians with particularly nationalist and revisionist views served as prime minister (and in other cabinet positions) during this period, most notably ABE Shinzo, ASO Taro and MORI Yoshiro.

*Independent variables: Domestic and international pressures for change*

The most important independent variables in this phase were bilateral pressures from China and South Korea, transnational activism, and the further development of the revisionist movement within Japan.

Bilateral pressures from China and South Korea

At the beginning of this phase, in 1999, both China and South Korea noticeably refrained from bringing up 'history issues' in their bilateral relations with Japan, albeit for slightly different reasons. In October 1998, the South Korean President Kim had promised that the historic acrimony related to Japan's colonization of South Korea would be put to rest by the written apology from the Japanese Prime Minister Obuchi, and in the early part of Phase Six South Korea upheld this promise. Chinese officials also did not say much about 'history issues' in the beginning of this phase, but their reticence was due to perceptions among both Chinese and Japanese officials that the Chinese Premier JIANG Zemin had overplayed the 'history card' in his unsuccessful visit in November 1998. As a result, Chinese officials attempted to repair the damage to the Sino-Japanese relationship by largely avoiding 'history issues' in the beginning of this phase (Wan 2006: 140). This was particularly evident during Obuchi's visit to Beijing in June 1999 (Okazaki 2000) and in the Chinese Premier ZHU Rongji's visit to Japan in October 2000 (Ito 2000; Kakuchi 2000).

And yet, China's and South Korea's efforts to move beyond 'history issues' began to reverse within a year or so. In early 2001, in response to reports that the Japanese Ministry of Education was going to approve the revisionist history textbook that had been prepared by *Tsukurukai*, China, South Korea and other countries protested the decision. The "South Korean Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry said in a statement that it 'cannot but feel deep regret' over the textbook, which 'includes accounts that justifies and glorifies [sic] (Japan's) past mistakes'" (*Kyodo News* 2001); South Korea recalled its ambassador to Japan; and Koreans protested in Seoul and boycotted Japanese products (Kakuchi 2001). Similarly, Chinese officials warned that the textbook "could 'damage the friendship' between the two countries" (Millett 2001), and that "'the political foundation of Sino-Japanese relations will be safeguarded only if the Japanese government handles the issue appropriately'" (*Kyodo News* 2001a). China also recalled its ambassador, and Taiwan and North Korea expressed their displeasure with the textbook. Nevertheless, both China and South Korea attempted to contain the fallout from this setback to their respective relations with Japan, since neither was eager to damage trade and diplomatic relations (Schneider 2008: 112). But, in a sign of the approach that would dominate in the

subsequent five years, the Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi acknowledged these countries' criticisms and feelings, but refused to intervene to order changes in the content or approval of the controversial textbook (Eckert 2001).

Over the next few years, China's and South Korea's efforts to prevent 'history issues' from interfering in the development of mutually-beneficial political and economic relations with Japan continued to be challenged. As the Japanese Prime Minister KOIZUMI Junichiro followed through on his campaign promise to officially visit the Yasukuni Shrine each year, Japan's relations with its Asian neighbors dramatically deteriorated. By 2004, after three straight years of annual official visits by Koizumi to the shrine, Koizumi was unwelcome in China and Chinese officials refused to hold normal bilateral meetings with him. As a result, Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations more or less ground to a halt during Koizumi's tenure from 2001 to 2006, while Japan's relations with South Korea similarly stagnated.

In the end, the most concrete outcome of this impasse was that the majority of Asian countries, including China and South Korea, refused to support Japan's bid for a permanent seat on an expanded UN Security Council, which it formally proposed as part of the so-called 'Group of Four' in July 2005 (Fujiwara 2005; McNeill and Selden 2005). (This lack of support was one of the factors that led to the failure of this proposal.) Moreover, while China and South Korea's demands related to history textbooks and shrine visits were unheeded by Koizumi and his government, these diplomatic protests prompted the repeated issuance of official apologies in this phase, thereby serving as a significant source of continuity in one indicator of the official narrative, while at the same time failing to have an impact on other indicators. Interestingly, after Koizumi left office, China and South Korea rushed to restore functional bilateral relations with Japan, with the tacit understanding that diplomatic relations could resume as long as Koizumi's successors did not officially visit the Yasukuni Shrine each year.<sup>610</sup>

#### Transnational redress movement

A second international source of pressure was from the evolving international war crimes redress movement. This movement began in the early 1990s, with initially nationally-distinct movements in South Korea and in the United States (and to a lesser-extent in China, at least at that point.) Over the course of the 1990s, however, these movements expanded and began to have a more visible role. And while activist organizations efforts were often focused on their own government's policies and on organizing protests against Japan within their own countries, connections between groups in different countries also began to develop. Moreover, these transnational connections often involved Japanese groups, such as the Japanese lawyers who helped Chinese war victims bring cases in Japanese courts, and the progressive Japanese educators and textbook activists who collaborated with Chinese and Korean counterparts to develop a joint (supplementary) history textbook on modern Asian history.<sup>611</sup> One such joint

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<sup>610</sup> As a result, Koizumi's insistence on visiting the shrine as a way of 'normalizing' relations with Japan's Asian neighbors might have actually worked as he had hoped, in some sense.

<sup>611</sup> The textbook that these activists wrote was completed in 2005, and is titled *History That Opens the Future: The Modern History of Three East Asian Nations* (Mirai o hiraku rekishi: higashi Ajia sangoku no kengendaishi) (Yoshida 2006b: 152). This effort began in 2002, with a three-day forum focused on historical perceptions that was organized in Nanjing and involved groups from Korea, Japan and China. It then continued with forums in Tokyo in



effort was the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal that was held in late 2000 in Tokyo (Seraphim 2006: 307-9). This symbolic tribunal was organized by women's and human rights groups from several Asian countries, most notably from Korea and Japan (Morris-Suzuki 2007: 188), and 'tried' and found guilty the late Emperor Hirohito and his government for their involvement in the 'comfort women' system. While this 'tribunal' was important in forging stronger connections between activists in different countries, in generating survivors' testimonies, and in offering many victims a chance to finally speak out about their suffering, it was largely ignored by the Japanese media and Japanese politicians (Kakuchi 2000b; Kwan 2000).<sup>612</sup> As a result, this effort – and many others like it – did not have a notable impact on the official narrative.

That said, two dimensions of this broad international activist movement did have somewhat of an impact on Japanese officials, if not a clear impact on the official narrative. One was the continued development of the activist movement in the US. In this phase, the efforts of this California-based movement led to the US President Clinton's 2000 order to have government records related to Japanese war crimes declassified and catalogued (Chea 2005; *Japan Economic Newswire* 2000), which over time generated a valuable new body of documentary evidence for researchers (*The Chronicle of Higher Education* 2007). They also led to attempts to pass a Congressional resolutions calling for Japan to apologize and compensate victims of war crimes. Following the first such attempt in 1997, other resolutions were reportedly proposed but did not get far, until July 2007, when H.Res.121 was passed by the House of Representatives. This resolution stated that the Government of Japan "should formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Forces' coercion of young women into sexual slavery."<sup>613</sup> This resolution was proposed and passed in response to a statement by the Japanese Prime Minister Abe denying the government's involvement in coercing women to participate in the system, so it signaled another front in the international responses related to 'history issues.' As with the earlier resolution, this one was troubling to the Japanese government, which was focused at the time on strengthening the bilateral relationship with the United States, and further galvanized revisionists in Japan. The other notable impact of this US-based movement was in 2005, when it organized a petition campaign against Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. This petition gathered more than 40 million signatures (Chea 2005) from people around the world, and was one of the factors that triggered the massive protests that broke out in China in April 2005.<sup>614</sup>

The other dimension of this transnational movement was in the legal realm, as Japanese lawyers continued to help Chinese and other victims of Japanese war crimes bring lawsuits in Japanese courts. As mentioned earlier, the vast majority of these cases were unsuccessful in legal terms.<sup>615</sup>

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early 2003 and in Seoul in the fall of 2003 (Mutsuko 2003), and culminated in the publication of the joint history textbook in three languages.

<sup>612</sup> Interestingly, it was later alleged (in January 2005) that the LDP politician ABE Shinzo had pressured the publicly-funded Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) to edit a documentary that it produced about the tribunal (Takehiko Kambayashi 2006).

<sup>613</sup> For the full text of the resolution and for information about its sponsors, see: <http://www.thomas.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c110:H.RES.121>; accessed on 28 July 2011.

<sup>614</sup> Author's interview with academic and government advisor [J-18], Tokyo, July 2008.

<sup>615</sup> Wan writes that, "as of March 2005, Chinese citizens had filed 26 lawsuits against the Japanese government and Japanese companies in the Japanese courts .... Three categories of victims have brought the suits: victims of forced

That said, several rulings affirmed the factuality of the Nanjing Massacre. In September 1999, a Tokyo District Court judge ruled in a compensation case that had been brought against the Japanese government by relatives of victims of the Nanjing Massacre and Unit 731. As in subsequent compensation cases, the judge ruled against the plaintiffs, finding that they did “not have the right to directly ask the Japanese government to compensate them for even the most inhuman of actions” (*Japan Economic Newswire* 1999). But at the same time, the ruling stated that “The atrocity known as the Nanjing Massacre definitely happened, although the exact scale of the devastation is not known. It is incorrect to say that it did not happen” (*The Daily Yomiuri/Yomiuri Shimbun* 1999). This ruling was an important acknowledgement of the existence of the Nanjing Massacre and Unit 731, as well as of the Japanese military’s responsibility in both crimes. Moreover, this ruling – which included a call for the Japanese government to apologize to the Chinese people for these crimes – prompted another official statement acknowledging the massacre, when the Chief Cabinet Secretary responded to the ruling at a press conference, saying: “While I am aware that there are various debates on the details (surrounding the Nanjing Massacre), it cannot be denied that killings of non-combatants and plunder occurred after Japanese troops entered Nanjing city walls” (*Japan Economic Newswire* 1999). Still, this official statement did not go as far as ones in 1998, since it did not explicitly acknowledge the responsibility of “Japanese troops” (or other Japanese actors or organizations) for these “killings of non-combatants.” Moreover, another Tokyo District Court ruling in a separate case, in May 2002, offered another judicial affirmation of the massacre. This second case was a libel suit brought by a survivor of the Nanjing Massacre, LI Xiuying, against the author and publisher of a revisionist book that questioned the Nanjing Massacre (Kitano 2002). This was the first ruling in favor of a non-Japanese war victim (Zhang 2002).

#### Revisionist movement (and progressive counter-efforts) in Japan

In this phase, societal actors, interest groups and politicians in Japan continued to push for the revision of textbooks, and for other symbolic and concrete steps that would downplay attention to Japan’s war crimes and minimize the Japanese government’s acceptance of responsibility for those crimes. While this movement had emerged in the previous phase, a notable development was that the motivating force behind revisionist efforts shifted in this phase. Previously, politicians and bureaucrats had often referred to pressures from conservative and nationalist interest groups as a factor that constrained how far they were willing and able to go in accepting responsibility for Japan’s war crimes. In this phase, however, the ascendance of more nationalist politicians in the Diet, along with the declining power of leftist parties in Japan, meant that politicians and elected officials themselves were often the motivating forces behind revisionist statements and actions.<sup>616</sup> In addition to this shift, two aspects of this continuing revisionist movement merit mention. First, revisionists continued to focus on getting references to Japan’s war crimes reduced in or removed from Japanese textbooks, which is discussed in the context of the dependent variable (below.) And second, following the 1997 publication of Iris Chang’s non-fiction book about the Nanjing Massacre, revisionist efforts in Japan focused more than had

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labor (16), victims of war atrocities (6), and comfort women (4). Forced labor cases generally target both the Japanese state and companies .... The suits by the victims of war and comfort women target the Japanese government exclusively and have all been filed in Tokyo” (2006: 305).

<sup>616</sup> This point was emphasized in particular by one interviewee (Author’s interview with *New York Times* journalist [J-2], Tokyo, July 2008.)

previously been the case on refuting and downplaying the Nanjing Massacre. Thus in January 2000 a revisionist group held a one-day conference meeting titled “The Biggest Lie in the Twentieth Century: Complete Verification of the Massacre in Nanjing” at the Osaka International Peace Centre (Jeans 2005: 176-7). Also in 2000, the powerful and conservative umbrella group, the Japan Conference, published a book titled *The Alleged ‘Nanking Massacre’: Japan’s Rebuttal to China’s Forged Claims*, which argued that the increasing attention to the massacre reflected a strategy on the part of China to undermine Japan’s alliance with the United States.<sup>617</sup> And finally, in October 2000, one of the founders of *Tsukurukai*, FUJIOKA Nobukatsu, and another scholar, HIGASHINAKANO Osamichi, established a research group called the Japan Association for ‘Nanjing’ Studies (*Nihon ‘Nankin’ kakkai*). According to Yoshida, “within five years, the association has published four volumes on Nanjing, including three annual reports” (2006b: 150). The Association’s general message is that “the Nanjing Massacre was not historical truth, but an illusion resulting from political manipulation” (*Ibid.*). Interestingly, however, these efforts often inspired protests and counter-efforts by progressives in Japan and activists elsewhere, and in some cases led Japanese officials to restate the official position (to clarify that these revisionist efforts *did not* reflect the government’s position.)

### *The dependent variable*

In this phase, officials continued to express their ‘heartfelt apology’ for Japan’s past aggression and for the suffering of victims of its war crimes, and official statements acknowledging the Nanjing Massacre moved one notch in the direction of more fully acknowledging the event and the Japanese military’s responsibility for it. And yet, on the other hand, this phase also included the reduced coverage of Japan’s war crimes in government-approved textbooks, the resumption of official visits to the Yasukuni Shrine by the prime minister, and a lack of official distancing from high-level politicians’ and some officials’ revisionist statements about aspects of Japan’s actions in the war. Altogether, the shifts in these different indicators highlight the increased strength of nationalist sentiment in Japan, particularly among politicians in the Diet and in national offices. In addition, these trends underline how official actors were able and willing to resist external pressure for change in the official narrative, even at the cost of the suspension of bilateral meetings with Asian leaders and the loss of crucial support for an important foreign policy goal (gaining a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.)

### Repeated apologies and further acknowledgement

One key feature of the dependent variable in this phase was the repeated issuance of official apologies by prime ministers and by other government officials. These apologies were issued in response to pressure for greater contrition from China, South Korea and other states, and were intended to reassure these states (and their citizens) that Japan did not pose a threat (militarily) and that Japan’s leaders remained committed to past statements of apology, remorse and friendship. The most notable aspect of the official apologies issued in this phase was that they

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<sup>617</sup> One interviewee confirmed that the Japan Conference began to focus on the Nanjing Massacre following the publication of Chang’s book. From the perspective of the Japan Conference, because of Iris Chang’s book, American public opinion turned against Japan, and many Americans started to hate Japan and Japanese people. Thus, because the Japan Conference placed great emphasis on the importance of US-Japan relations, it therefore could not ignore this issue (Author’s interview with a representative of Japan Conference [J-6], Tokyo, July 2008.)

typically repeated key parts of Murayama's apology statement from August 1995. In contrast to the previous phase, however, these apologies were often perceived by victims and victim states as being empty or perfunctory, because they were seemingly directly contradicted by other official actions and policies. In spite of these accusations, on the face of things (or when considered in isolation from other indicators), official rhetoric shifted slightly in this phase, since apologies were issued more frequently than before, and in some cases were delivered to Asian audiences outside of Japan. For example, in October 2001 Prime Minister Koizumi visited Beijing, during which he visited the Marco Polo Bridge, which is where the Second Sino-Japanese War officially began. And while Prime Minister Murayama had visited this bridge several years earlier, Koizumi "expressed his 'heartfelt apology and condolences (*kokoro kara owabi to aito*) to the Chinese people who fell victim to aggression'" (Rose 2005: 108), which went further than Murayama's more delimited statement recognizing the 'unbearable suffering and sorrow' caused by Japan's actions. Koizumi further stated that he would like to develop Sino-Japanese relations on the basis of 'wholehearted sincerity' and 'considerateness' (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2001). Finally, when relations with China and South Korea were at a nadir, because of Koizumi's annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine and other history-related issues, Koizumi made a strong statement of apology before an audience of leaders of 100 countries at the Asian-African summit in Indonesia in April 2005. This statement was notable because of the audience before which it was made. As one article noted, "the venue was considered important. Murayama's statement was made at home, while Koizumi's apology came at an international forum with many of Japan's former victims ... in attendance" (*OsterDowJones Commodity Wire* 2005). And yet, other indicators shifted in the opposite direction, thereby undercutting the perceived value of these official apologies in the eyes of their intended recipients.

In addition to these official apologies, as in the previous phase, Japanese officials explicitly acknowledged the Nanjing Massacre in several official statements, most often in an attempt to clarify that a particular revisionist statement was not consistent with the government's view of the event. These statements of acknowledgement went further than those in the previous phase, however, by explicitly acknowledging that the Japanese army had killed civilians in Nanjing. Thus, at a press conference in April 1999 the Chief Cabinet Secretary NONAKA Hiromu stated: "I think it cannot be denied that civilians were killed and looting took place when Japanese troops conquered Nanjing and entered the city." And he further noted: "It is extremely regrettable if these things are used as political tools and affect bilateral ties at a time when we are trying to build new Japan-China relations" (Kwan 1999). This statement was made to quell Chinese dissatisfaction over several statements denying the massacre that were made by the politician ISHIHARA Shintaro as he campaigned for the governorship of Tokyo (*BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific – Political* 1999). A month later, again in response to Chinese protests over statements by Ishihara, who was by then the governor of Tokyo, the Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman NUMATA Sadaaki restated the government's views on the Nanjing Massacre at a press conference, saying: "It can't be denied the imperial Japanese army massacred civilians and engaged in looting after the fall of Nanjing.' But he noted some differences remain between the two nations over certain historical facts, including the number of victims. 'It's difficult for the government to sanction any specific death toll.' Numata reiterated Japan's apology and remorse for the suffering and damage inflicted on other Asian people during the war" (*BBC Monitoring Service: Asia-Pacific* 1999). In this statement the role of the 'imperial

Japanese army' in massacring civilians was more clearly stated. That said, in these and in subsequent official statements acknowledging the event in this phase, officials *avoided* going so far as to formally state that the Japanese government accepted responsibility for the massacres. Instead, these official statements typically acknowledged the killing and looting that took place in Nanjing after the city was taken or entered by the Japanese army.<sup>618</sup> This *implied* the responsibility of the Japanese army, but did not clearly state it.

### Signs of backtracking

And yet, at the same time that Japanese officials were repeating official apologies and making statements that more clearly and fully acknowledged the basic facts of the Nanjing Massacre and that also *indirectly* acknowledged the role of the Japanese military in causing the massacre, there were a number of ways in which the official narrative returned to mythmaking and relativizing the event. These reverse steps were particularly evident in symbolic actions by officials and in the coverage of the massacre and other war crimes in Japanese textbooks, but there were also indications of backtracking in some official statements. Moreover, these steps toward mythmaking and relativizing were particularly the result of politicians' actions (with bureaucrats' participation.)

In terms of official statements, the high-level gaffes continued in this phase, and were made by politicians who in many cases spoke with the official voice of the state, thereby making the gaffes more serious than those made by cabinet ministers or parliamentarians who did have the clear responsibility of speaking officially on 'history issues.' Moreover, the officials who made revisionist statements in this phase were *not* asked to resign or even to apologize, thereby signaling that the government did not feel the need to distance itself from the statements. Thus, in January 2001 the Prime Minister Mori referred in public comments "to the Pacific War as the 'Greater East Asia War,' and to the Sino-Japanese War as the 'China Incident'" (Kattoulas 2001), both of which were terms used during WWII and which were widely-understood signals of revisionist views. In response, "Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda indicated that the terms were inappropriate but emphasized that Mori meant no harm" (*The Japan Times Online* 2001). Moreover, in July 2003, a leading LDP politician, ETO Takami stated in a speech at a party meeting: "'To say 300,000 people were killed in the Rape of Nanking is a pure fabrication, a big lie.'" However, as one article noted, "it wasn't clear ... whether Eto was referring to the entire massacre or to the estimates of 300,000 people being killed" (*Taipei Times* 2003). Nevertheless, the government declined to comment on this statement, saying that "the government does not have to be responsible for all statements lawmakers make" (*Kyodo News International, Inc.* 2003). And in June 2005, the Education Minister NAKAYAMA Nariaki, in comments at a community meeting, "accused the country's mostly left-leaning teaching establishment of focusing too much on Japan's war guilt in classrooms, saying it 'has overemphasized that Japan is a bad country.' 'We need to education children so that they can live to be proud and confident as Japanese'" (Pearson 2005). He also said "that 'comfort women'

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<sup>618</sup> For example, in January 2000 the Foreign Ministry spokesman Numata stated: "'We do feel it is an undeniable fact that after the Japanese army entered Nanjing in 1937, there were noncombatants who were killed, and looting and other acts'" (Yvonne Chang 2000). This statement was made in response to Chinese diplomatic protests and anger over a conference denying the Nanjing Massacre that the government did not prevent from being held (as the Chinese government had demanded) at a public venue in Osaka.

were fiction and that this ‘non-existent’ issue should be removed from history textbooks” (Yao Ying 2005). In this instance both Nakayama and the Chief Cabinet Secretary clarified the latter comments, acknowledging that ‘comfort women’ did exist (Yao Ying 2005), but Nakayama remained in office and did not issue an apology. Finally, on the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the war, in August 2005, the Diet again passed a commemorative resolution (as it had done in 1995.) While this statement that was not a ‘gaffe,’ it *was* another clear indication of official backtracking. The 2005 resolution differed from the 1995 in a couple of subtle but important ways, thereby revealing the changes in political views over the ten-year period. Crucially, “though expressing ‘regret’ for the wartime past, the [2005] resolution omitted the references to ‘invasion’ and ‘colonial rule’ that were in the version passed on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary” (Onishi and French 2005).

The coverage of Japan’s war crimes in its textbooks also diminished in this phase. The reduced coverage resulted from the efforts of conservative politicians and bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education, along with pressure and help from revisionist groups within Japanese society, particularly *Tsukurukai*. Importantly, however, the changes in textbooks’ coverage of Japan’s war crimes – especially the ‘comfort women’ system and the Nanjing Massacre – were made with the support and help of high-level elected and appointed officials.

The decrease in textbook coverage of Japan’s war crimes began in 2000. In January 1999, the Ministry of Education requested that publishers make sure that textbooks were ‘more balanced.’ In response to this request, and possibly also in response to behind-the-scenes pressure on textbook publishers from government officials,<sup>619</sup> when the final drafts of publishers’ textbooks were submitted to the ministry for review in the spring of 2000, “many descriptions concerning Japanese wartime atrocities had been cut back or removed altogether” (Nozaki 2002: 616).<sup>620</sup> For instance, compared to textbooks by the same publishers that had been submitted previously, “two of the seven textbooks [submitted in 2000] had changed the phrase ‘Nanjing massacre’ to ‘Nanjing incident,’ according to the Asahi Shimbun” (*The Times of India* 2000b). Moreover, “on the Nanjing massacre, six drafts discussed the episode, but only one put a concrete figure – 200,000 – on the number of casualties . . . . The others either described the number of casualties as ‘many’ or said there is no accepted count or that the tally is still in debate. Current textbooks mention specific numbers, such as 200,000 and ‘more than 100,000’” (*Japan Economic Newswire* 2000b). In addition to the publishers who typically submitted textbooks for review, in 2000 *Tsukurukai* submitted the junior high school history textbook that it had prepared to the Ministry of Education for review. This textbook – which is most often referred to as the *Fusosha* textbook, after the name of the publishing company – was much more sparing in its coverage of Japan’s war crimes than other publishers’ textbooks. Importantly, however, it reportedly received strong political support from within the Diet and from the Education Minister (Ho 2005a; Nozaki 2002: 618). Thus, in spite of vociferous warnings not to approve the *Fusosha* textbook from China and South Korea, the Ministry tentatively approved it, while still requesting 137 changes in the text, compared to an average of 25 requested for the other seven textbooks (*The Daily*

<sup>619</sup> For example, Rose writes that this request was “allegedly backed up by pressure (in the form of telephone calls) from the Prime Minister’s Office” (2005: 60).

<sup>620</sup> This change in textbook publishers’ choices regarding how much and what to cover regarding Japan’s war crimes has been referred to as ‘self-censorship’ (Nozaki 2008: 144-5), although the publishers’ changes seem to have been more than merely self-motivated.

*Yomiuri/Yomiuri Shimbun* 2001). After a number of minor revisions were made, some in response to the unrelenting international pressure (Hadfield 2001), the *Fusosha* textbook was finally approved. Thus, in the textbooks that were approved for use beginning in 2002, the coverage of war crimes was notably reduced compared to the previous phase. In particular, “only one of the eight [approved textbooks] mentioned sex slaves, and none mentioned the scale of the Nanjing massacre” (Yamaguchi 2001), while the *Fusosha* textbook stated: “‘Some doubts are cast in documents concerning this case [i.e., the Nanjing Massacre], so there are various views, and the controversy continues even today’” (Fukada 2001).<sup>621</sup> Furthermore, this trend continued throughout this phase, led (at least superficially) by *Tsukurukai*, with strong support from conservative Diet members and Education Ministry officials, and with the tacit (and in some cases, active) support of the cabinet and various prime ministers. Reflecting the reduced coverage throughout this phase, Nozaki writes that “Japan’s history textbooks currently (in 2007) in use in junior high schools include fewer materials that discuss Japan’s war atrocities than those used in 1997. Among the eight textbooks on the market, none refer to comfort women in the main text; only two include the term ‘taken-by-force’ (*kyosei renko*, forced labor of Korean and Chinese men); and almost none of the texts refer to the number of victims killed in the Nanjing Massacre” (2008: 149).

Finally, the last indicator of the government’s backtracking to mythmaking and relativizing in this phase came in the realm of symbolic actions. As mentioned above, Koizumi paid one official visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in each of the six years that he was prime minister,<sup>622</sup> in contrast to the single visit by a sitting prime minister in the entire prior decade (by Hashimoto in 1996.) With each visit to the shrine, Koizumi attempted to impress upon international and domestic critics that he was doing so *not* to honor the 14 Class A war criminals at the shrine. For example, on his first visit on 13 August 2001, Koizumi stated: “‘I simply paid my sincere condolences to the numerous war dead. I did not come to worship any particular individual, such as class A war criminals’” (Gordon et al. 2001). Moreover, until his last year in office, Koizumi assiduously avoided visiting the shrine on the anniversary of the end of the war on August 15<sup>th</sup>, and he attempted to mute the religious meaning of each visit by not fully complying with the shrine’s Shinto rites (in various ways.) And yet, none of these tactics placated the escalating chorus of criticism that came from both international and domestic sources.<sup>623</sup> Nevertheless, Koizumi continued his visits until the end of his tenure. Among the reasons for Koizumi’s refusal to stop visiting the shrine during his term in office, several factors were key. *First*, Koizumi wanted to keep his campaign promise to visit the shrine annually, in part to rejuvenate the Japanese public’s trust in public officials, and also to reassert the power of the executive in Japanese

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<sup>621</sup> And while progressive textbook activists were largely successful in their campaign to convince school boards not to choose the *Fusosha* textbook for use in their district’s schools, the Ministry’s approval of the textbook (and its content) is the outcome that is reflective of the official narrative, not the rate of adoption.

<sup>622</sup> As Prime Minister, Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine on 13 August 2001, 21 April 2002, 14 January 2003, 1 January 2004, 17 October 2005 and 15 August 2006 (Saaler 2005: 196; *Japan Echo* 2005; *Japan Echo* 2006b).

<sup>623</sup> Notable among domestic critics were: the editor of the conservative national newspaper, *The Yomiuri Shimbun*, who surprised many when he wrote an editorial opposing Koizumi’s visits in June 2005 (Onishi 2006); at least one domestic court, which ruled that official prime ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine was a violation of the Constitution’s separation of state and religion (*Japan Echo* 2005); business leaders and organizations (Ibison 2004; Onishi 2005a); and a wide range of political leaders and bureaucrats, including politicians from within the LDP, which was Koizumi’s own party (Wan 2006: 240; *Yomiuri Shimbun* and *Asahi Shimbun* 2005).

politics.<sup>624</sup> *Second*, Koizumi wanted to establish a stronger, more independent Japan, especially in its foreign policy, and he saw these visits as a way to send China (in particular) a strong message that it would not be able to continue pressuring Japan to do what it wanted on issues related to the past. For example, in January 2006, “at a New Year’s press conference, Prime Minister Koizumi Jun’ichirô respond[ed] to Chinese and South Korean criticism of his visits to Yasukuni Shrine, saying, “I don’t think this should be made into a diplomatic problem. I do not understand why a foreign government would interfere in a concern of the heart of one politician”” (*Japan Echo* 2006a). And while this statement was fundamentally disingenuous, in that it should – and must – have been obvious to him why a foreign government like China or South Korea would have an interest in this issue, this statement is revealing of one of Koizumi’s hoped-for outcomes. *Third*, and related to this second point, Koizumi wanted to send China a pointed message that it should stop ‘using’ the history issue as a tool with which to criticize Japan and as a leverage with which to pry economic and political concessions from Japan. A *Financial Times* article from 2005 highlighted this motivation. The article reported that, “according to one foreign ministry official who counseled Mr Koizumi to stop [his annual visits to the shrine], the prime minister was resolute. ‘His face went completely red and he grew very angry,’ he recalls. ‘He said: ‘Don’t you understand? Unless I keep visiting the shrine, China will forever bring up this issue. By continuing to go, I can put a stop to this once and for all’” (Dickie and Pilling 2005).<sup>625</sup> Consequently, Koizumi’s annual visits to the shrine for much of this period, along with the visits of large numbers of conservative Diet members and cabinet members on 15 August throughout this phase, signaled an official relativizing of Japan’s war crimes, *even if that was not Koizumi’s intention*.<sup>626</sup>

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<sup>624</sup> One interviewee particularly emphasized these points (Author’s interview with *New York Times* journalist [J-2], Tokyo, July 2008.)

<sup>625</sup> In addition, one interviewee pointed out that Koizumi’s views were not particularly nationalist or revisionist, so his visits should not really be attributed to nationalism as a motivation (Author’s interview with political analyst [J-1], Tokyo, July 2008); while another noted that Koizumi is a stubborn person, which partially explains his unwillingness to back down, even as criticisms of his visits escalated domestically (Author’s interview with *New York Times* journalist [J-2], Tokyo, July 2008.)

<sup>626</sup> An interesting additional point is made by Ming WAN, who writes that “the Japanese Foreign Ministry was not central to Koizumi’s decisions. The China specialists knew that it would be difficult to stop Koizumi’s visit and were mainly concerned with how to explain this to the Chinese side. This case shows that a popular prime minister can brush aside bureaucrats” (2006: 243).



## – Chapter 9 – Conclusions and Insights

States tell myriad stories about their national pasts, some true, some untrue, and some that combine truth and untruth through subtleties of word, action and symbol. These stories play a key role in shaping citizens' perceptions of themselves, history and others; and in setting the terms of states' relationships with their own citizens, with other states, and even with other states' citizens. This project investigates the trajectories of two states' stories about dark pasts – Turkey's narrative of the Armenian Genocide and Japan's narrative of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War – and develops a set of arguments about the sources of change and continuity in states' narratives of dark pasts. In this concluding chapter, I review the dissertation's main arguments and implications, note how these points contribute to broader academic debates, and highlight areas for future research.

### *The central argument*

My central argument is that *while international pressures can increase the likelihood of change in official narratives of dark pasts, domestic actors largely determine the content of such change*. This broad point unpacks into two separate arguments.

I have argued that international pressures can increase the likelihood of change in a target state's narrative, and that such pressures are also more likely to prompt change than pressures from domestic sources. In the Turkish case, we have seen that two sources of international pressure in the 1970s prompted the shift from Phase One to Phase Two, while international pressures in the late 1990s and especially in 2000/2001 prompted the shift from Phase Three to Phase Four. In the Japanese case, international pressures from China, South Korea and other Asian countries triggered changes in the narrative that led to the shift in 1982 from Phase Two to Phase Three, and were one of the factors that led to shifts in the narrative in Phase Five and Phase Six. This argument contrasts somewhat with the political scientist David Art's conclusion that domestic public debate was a stronger determinant than international pressure of the process of coming to terms with the traumatic past in both Germany and Austria. With regard to the Austria case, he writes that "international factors ... did not matter in the way one might have expected. One might have predicted that a small state heavily reliant on international trade would have cared deeply about its international reputation and done everything to demonstrate that it was taking responsibility for its painful history. Yet exactly the opposite occurred during the Waldheim affair as Austrian elites thumbed their noses at international censure" (2006: 143-4). And yet, as I note in Chapter 2, this international pressure initiated a domestic debate that gradually led to changes in Austria's narrative, which is consistent with my overarching argument.

This research also highlights the *multifaceted* nature of changes that can arise in response to international pressures. In the Turkish case, increasing international recognition of the Armenian Genocide was the main catalyst for changes in the content of the narrative and in the efforts made to defend it from 2001. Yet while the content has shifted to acknowledge some of the basic facts of the genocide, Turkish officials have simultaneously taken a number of steps to more effectively defend core elements of the official narrative. Consequently, this step in the direction

of acknowledgement has been accompanied by the continued – and arguably strengthened – rejection of the label genocide. This argument – that states’ responses to international pressures are often complex and ambivalent – starkly contrasts with one of the conclusions that Jennifer Lind draws from her study of how perpetrator states’ levels of contrition affect victim states’ perceptions of the threat that the former pose in the present. In extending beyond her core findings regarding threat perceptions between states, she argues that “pressuring countries to atone has the benefit of raising awareness of past human rights violations, both globally and within the culpable country. At the same time, it is likely to create backlash within the targeted country, which damages relations with former victims. If international pressure alienates moderates and empowers the nationalist Right, this backlash may also have domestic political effects that the international community might find troubling” (Lind 2008: 7). In contrast, my research has shown that responses to international pressure can come from *across* the political spectrum – not just from “the nationalist Right” – and that over the longer term, states’ and societal actors’ responses are more varied than Lind implies.

These cases have also revealed that whether change arises in response to international pressure, and what the nature and direction of such change might be, are impossible to determine without considering other factors. In both cases, the timing, content and direction of changes in the respective narratives were strongly influenced by factors within the domestic sphere, even for the changes that were largely prompted by international pressures. In particular, I have argued that actors within the domestic sphere largely determine the content and extent of changes in an official narrative, along with the precise timing of such change. This contrasts with one element of Risse, Ropp and Sikkink’s ‘spiral model’ theory of the processes through which states’ practices change in response to pressures to adhere to international human rights norms. They largely overlook the agency of state actors in target states and dismiss the importance of domestic factors, noting that domestic structures “mostly account for the timing of changes [in] rather than their substance” (Risse and Ropp 1999: 239). And yet my research has shown that in both the Turkish and Japanese cases, official actors determined whether, when and how to change the narrative. Of course, their decisions were not made in isolation, and they were often constrained by the broader domestic context as well as by the preferences of specific domestic groups with influence and access to state actors. Nevertheless, the preceding chapters have shown that in both the Turkish and Japanese cases, government ministries and state officials have had the agency to produce, defend and change their respective narratives over the past sixty years.

### *Accounting for these narratives’ different trajectories*

Moving beyond the central argument, this research has also traced the similarities and differences between the trajectories of the two narratives studied in this project. In particular, while both narratives have exhibited strong degrees of continuity over time, the Turkish narrative has been much more resistant to change and has been much more strongly defended by Turkish officials and institutions. Three main factors account for these differences.

The first stems from the motivations of state actors in each case. As mentioned above, I have argued that state actors are more likely to resist pressures for change in a narrative if the narrative functions as a source of legitimacy for the state, state institutions, and/or individual

state actors. In Chapter Three, I outlined how Turkey's narrative undergirds key sources of legitimacy for the Turkish state, as well as for core political institutions within Turkey. Compared with the Japanese case, Turkish officials have had much higher 'stakes' in the maintenance of the official narrative. At the same time, officials in both countries have had material incentives to maintain the status quo. Both Japanese officials and Turkish officials have been concerned that change in their respective narratives could lead to material demands for compensation or territory, which partially accounts for the strong continuities in each narrative. These concerns, however, have been stronger in the Turkish case than in the Japanese case, which is another factor that accounts for the differences in the trajectories of the two narratives.

Another crucial difference between the two cases arises from the nature of each country's diplomatic relations with the relevant former victim state(s). I have argued that the impact of pressure by a victim state on a perpetrator state is to a large extent contingent on the existence of normal diplomatic relations between the two countries. In their absence, claims about 'history issues' are more easily dismissed or ignored by perpetrator states. In Turkey's case, the absence of normal diplomatic relations with an independent Armenian state for nearly the entire period since the genocide has meant that Armenia has had a limited ability to directly pressure Turkey on this issue. This has been compounded by the fact that Armenia has been much weaker than Turkey in political and economic terms, which has further limited its ability to successfully pressure Turkey to change its narrative. In the Japanese case, prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations with most of the Asian countries that it had occupied during WWII, 'history issues' were often reduced to a bargaining chip in the process of establishing relations. Given that most of those countries were relatively weaker and poorer than Japan, many (but not all) prioritized official recognition and development aid from Japan over an insistence on 'official' reparations or an apology for Japan's wrongdoing. Moreover, the first changes in Japan's narrative arose in the process of normalizing relations with China, while later shifts followed after diplomatic normalization.

The third difference between the two cases derives from the degree of domestic contestation and challenge, which in turn stems from differences in the formal and informal constraints on freedom of expression on these issues in each country. In Turkey, legal constraints have deterred most people from publicly talking about or looking into the 'Armenian question.' The most prominent of these constraints has been a series of broadly-written laws that have made it dangerous to make public statements that are at odds with the official narrative on the 'Armenian question,' since doing so risked being prosecuted and possibly jailed for insulting the nation, the military or Atatürk himself. In addition, a taboo on the discussion of this issue has – until the past ten to fifteen years – muted discussion in the Turkish media and in Turkish books (Maksudyan 2009), while academics interested in studying the 'Armenian question' have long been made to understand that doing so would damage their career prospects in serious ways.<sup>627</sup> Somewhat in contrast to the situation in Turkey, the constraints on the public discussion of Japan's war crimes have been primarily informal. A domestic taboo initially limited discussion of the Nanjing Massacre in the Japanese media and in academia, but this taboo began to break down much earlier than in the Turkish case, with the first challenges coming in the early 1970s (when relations with China were restored.) In addition, a small but highly vocal and intimidating right-

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<sup>627</sup> This has been changing in the past ten years, but the changes are limited mostly to a handful of private universities and to prominent Turkish academics and intellectuals with professional connections abroad.

wing nationalist fringe, along with social pressures that discourage many people from studying or looking into Japan's war crimes, have together limited domestic challenges to the official narrative. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that these constraints are informal ones, whereas those in Turkey have been both formal and informal, which partially accounts for the fact that domestic contestation in Japan arose earlier and has been more robust than in Turkey.

### *Structure as a constraint on change*

Beyond these core claims, I have advanced two additional arguments about the sources of continuity and change. The first argument concerns structural factors, by which I mean, simply, contextual factors that constrain the agency of actors. As other scholars have observed, structural factors at both the domestic and international levels have supported and helped to reinforce continuities in each narrative over time. In each case, I have traced domestic and international contextual factors that have contributed to the striking continuities in each narrative over the past several decades. In addition, I have argued that when an aspect of the political structure that functions as a major support for a narrative changes, as when the LDP's long run in power briefly came to an end in Japan in 1993, the narrative can change fairly quickly. And yet, while change in a structural factor can lead to change in a state's narrative, such change is neither guaranteed nor predictable.

A notable example of this is in the Turkish case: The AKP came to power in late 2002 and has remained in control of the Turkish Parliament since then (and also of the Presidency since 2007), leading to the gradual diminishment of the power and authority of the military, and the waning influence of the mainstream secular parties that have long defended the official narrative. And yet this momentous shift in the domestic political landscape has not led to major changes in the official narrative. Instead, while the AKP has accommodated increasing domestic and international pressures on the official narrative in limited ways, with minor and largely symbolic adjustments, the content of the narrative and especially the strategies used to defend it have demonstrated remarkable continuities. I argue that these continuities are a result of the facts that, over time the production of the narrative has been embedded in a range of government institutions, and that officials have also involved powerful societal actors in its defense. As a result, these institutions have continued to produce the official narrative, while societal actors who were enlisted in earlier phases to help defend the narrative (both from within and outside the state) have constrained the scope for possible change more recently by publicly speaking out against change and pushing their own views about the content of the narrative and how it should be defended.

Finally, to offer an example from the international level, my analysis has also shown that while the end of the Cold War was a watershed that led to significant changes in the contexts within which each narrative was constructed, it is difficult to attribute any particular shifts in either narrative to this change. It is also impossible, however, to dismiss the relevance of this structural shift to the subsequent trajectories of each narrative.

### *Feedback effects as sources of change and continuity*

Moving to an institutional level, I have argued that feedback effects are a key feature of the ongoing political dynamics within which official narratives are produced and reproduced over time. As informal political institutions, states' narratives are both outcomes of political decisions, and policies that influence and constrain the ideas and actors that are involved in later political decisions. In defining 'institution,' I borrow Hall and Taylor's characterization of sociological institutionalists' understanding of the term. They write that "the sociological institutionalists tend to define institutions much more broadly than political scientists do to include, not just formal rules, procedures or norms, but the symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates that provide the 'frames of meaning' guiding human action" (1996: 14). Specifically, the production of an official narrative, and especially change in a narrative, can set in motion actors and dynamics that impact that narrative at later points in time. In particular, these narratives generate both ideational and material feedback effects via societal as well as official actors.

In the Turkish case, official actors' understanding of the events have been shaped and reinforced through the process of producing and defending the official narrative, leading to a strengthening of officials' resistance to changing the official narrative. As Turkish officials developed different strategies to defend and disseminate their narrative in Phase Two, they learned how to frame and communicate their own argument, and how to effectively challenge and undermine competing arguments. Consequently, the strategies used by officials to defend the narrative in Phase Four have replicated many of the strategies used in earlier phases to remarkable effect, succeeding in defending core aspects of the narrative from escalating external and internal challenges.

In addition, as described above, formal and informal constraints on discussion of the 'Armenian question' within Turkey have, over time, effectively insulated the official narrative from challenges from societal actors. This happened through three related mechanisms: Turkish citizens were socialized to believe or at least not to consider questioning the official narrative; Turkish journalists, academics and publishers learned to avoid or elide the topic,<sup>628</sup> and Turkish Armenians understood and/or learned not to speak about or work on this topic through the continual questioning of their loyalty and through the continuing precariousness of their position within Turkey. Also at the societal level, in their efforts to defend and disseminate their narrative, especially in Phases Two and Four, Turkish officials have helped create and/or support societal organizations that have produced publications, research, and experts on the 'Armenian question.' While some of these organizations might be most accurately termed GONGOs – or government-sponsored non-governmental organizations, to use a term recently defined by the

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<sup>628</sup> For example, the historian Nazan Maksudyan has critically analyzed translations of English-language historical scholarship that refers (in passing) to the genocide or massacres of Armenians into Turkish, and she found that what was most often censored was not the word 'genocide,' but facts and interpretations of the actual events and of Ottoman authorities' responsibility for the events. She argues that "what is meant to be silenced in this tumultuous environment is not the term genocide but the historical account and details of the massacres of 1915-1916" (2009: 645). She further argues that this censorship of translations is intended to preserve the Turkish public's lack of knowledge about the events, and to keep the public discussion of the 'Armenian question' fixed on the 'debate' over whether or not the events should properly be termed 'genocide.' While such 'self-censorship' is not an official act, since it is done by translators, publishers and editors, she emphasizes that it reflects their perceptions of what is permissible and what is likely to risk prosecution for violating laws that restrict freedom of expression in Turkey (*Ibid.*: 639).

journalist and economist Moisés Naím (2007) – they are nevertheless located within civil society. In particular, several think tanks have produced important publications on the Armenian question, including the Foreign Policy Institute in Phase Two, and ERAREN and ASAM in Phase Four. Their publications have helped reinforce continuity in the official narrative by bolstering the content of the official narrative with ‘new’ research, and by sharing it with Turkish politicians, American politicians and policymakers, Turkish academics, and the interested public. Moreover, two sets of actors, each of which became involved in defending the official narrative in Phase Two, have continued to support the status quo in subsequent phases. These are: Turkish diplomats, a number of whom have been prominent defenders of the official narrative in their post-retirement lives; and Turkish-American organizations, such as the ATAA, the Turkish Coalition of America, and the Turkish Forum, which were taught about this issue and encouraged to work on it by Turkish officials and have become strong defenders of the official narrative.

In contrast to these continuity-supporting feedback effects, other feedback effects have generated pressures for change in the official narrative. In Phases Three and Four, societal actors began to mobilize to oppose and challenge aspects of the official narrative, often in response to official statements, actions or publications that were deemed particularly offensive or problematic. While the Turkish state has resisted these challenges at a basic level, they have begun to alter the context within which the narrative is produced, and have also succeeded in a few particular instances – often in conjunction with influential external actors, particularly the EU – in directly constraining state actors.

In the Japanese case, some of these same feedback processes are also evident. In particular, shifts in the content of the narrative have frequently led societal actors within Japan to mobilize, with some groups deciding to challenge the official narrative, while others have taken action to help resist further changes in the official narrative. Even more so than in the Turkish case, the Japanese narrative has generated and been affected by feedback effects over the entire period traced in this project and by groups across the entire range of the political spectrum, from right-wing ultranationalists willing to use violence to preserve their vision of Japan’s past actions to Communists, Socialists and progressives who have pushed and fought (in courts, school boards, classrooms and elsewhere) for the state to acknowledge more of Japan’s wartime aggression and crimes and to take concrete steps to back up acknowledgement with apologies, compensation, commemoration and memorialization. Moreover, in both the Japanese and the Turkish cases, many of the international activist groups that have mobilized to pressure Turkey and Japan to change their narratives have done so in response to the ongoing production of these narratives or in response to shifts in one of the narrative’s indicators.

Finally, one point that deserves emphasis is that both cases have exhibited feedback from actors on the political left, right and center within each country, as well as from international actors and bodies. This broad range of feedback effects highlights the limits of Jennifer Lind’s warning about “the potential dangers of contrition” (2008: 4). She argues that states should tread a careful line between recognition of past atrocities and too much contrition, arguing the latter often risks a nationalist backlash from domestic conservatives, which can undermine the goal of interstate reconciliation that (she argues) often motivates a state’s apology in the first place. While her observation of the potential for a nationalist backlash is not inaccurate, my research reveals that

‘backlash’ (to use her term) or ‘feedback’ (to use my term) arises from more than just one segment of the population. Instead, like the responses of states to international pressures, societal responses to changes in a state’s narrative are often complex and multiple, of which ‘nationalist backlash’ is but one stripe.

### ***Further insights***

Moving beyond the dissertation’s core arguments, two additional sets of insights can be drawn from this research.

#### *The impact of international norms*

The first set of insights concerns the impact of the international norms of truth-seeking and against impunity on states’ narratives. As I outlined in Chapter 1, a number of scholars have noted the escalation of calls – especially since the end of the Cold War – for states (and other institutions) to recognize, come to terms with, and/or apologize for past wrongs. Moreover, international relations scholars have specified a range of ways in which human rights norms, like these, emerge and spread among states. However, as I also noted, there is a need for work that traces the ways in which state actors *resist* the influence of such ideas. My research identifies the ideational and material motivations that account for whether state actors are more or less likely to resist calls to change their narratives. Specifically, I have argued that state actors are more likely to resist changing a narrative if it functions as a source of domestic legitimacy for the state, state institutions and/or state actors. In particular, the more fundamental a narrative is to the preservation of the state and/or state institutions’ legitimacy, the more likely state actors are to actively resist pressures to change the narrative.

In addition, the empirical chapters on the Turkish and Japanese cases have traced how state actors resist pressures for change in their narratives, including institutional, legal, and rhetorical strategies. Among these, one of the most interesting strategies of resistance is state actors’ learning from and manipulation of international norms in order to more effectively defend the narrative from pressures stemming from those norms. In Chapter 2 and in the empirical chapters, I have identified a number of ways in which these international norms have contributed to international and domestic pressures on both Turkey and Japan’s narratives.<sup>629</sup> Alongside these more predictable mechanisms of normative influence, however, I have also uncovered a range of ways in which Turkish officials have identified and attempted to manipulate *opportunities* created by these norms. Thus while progressive activists have learned and gained support from these ideas and from international human rights networks, Turkish officials have also been attentive to these norms and have developed strategies that reflect their own learning. For example, one of the arguments advanced in Phase Two was that calling what happened to Ottoman Armenians ‘genocide’ would undermine the moral strength of the term genocide and would threaten the memory of the Holocaust. More recently, in Phase Four, Turkish officials have argued that they are ‘ready to face the past,’ would like to engage in ‘dialogue’ with Armenia, and are committed to ‘reconciliation.’ At the same time, they have repeatedly implied and/or stated that Armenian officials are not committed to these ideals, and that this lack of

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<sup>629</sup> I want to emphasize, however, that *material* pressures and considerations – not international norms – are the core drivers of changes and continuities in these narratives.

commitment supports Turkey's contention that the 'claims' related to these events are not historically sound or settled. Both of these rhetorical claims reflect an awareness of the content of these international norms and of the normative expectations of international activists and states, should be understood as Turkish officials' attempts to adapt their claims to the reflect those expectations (rhetorically, but not substantively.) These and other such findings are identified in Chapter 2 and in the empirical chapters on the Turkish case.<sup>630</sup>

### *The nature of change*

This research also reveals patterns in the *nature* of change in states' narratives of dark pasts. One observation is that official narratives tend to change incrementally. In both cases analyzed in this project, the majority of the changes over the course of the past sixty years were incremental ones, in which the narrative shifted a single step along the continuum, while significant portions of the content of the narrative remained constant. Looking across both cases, there were three points of change that were more sharp than the rest – from Phase One to Two in the Turkish case, and from Phases One to Two and Four to Five in the Japanese case – but even in these instances, the continuities were notable. Perhaps the clearest instance of change was the shift in Turkey's narrative in 1981 from one of silence to a robust narrative that denied, relativized and mythologized about the deportation of Armenians. As I describe in Chapters 3 and 4, however, many of the themes that were articulated and disseminated in Phase Two were arguments that had been developed in the immediate post-WWI period and that had been made occasionally in Phase One. In the Japanese case, while the changes in the narrative in Phase Five were momentous, Prime Minister Murayama's apology and some of the other shifts built on steps made by Prime Minister Hosokawa and other officials in the previous phase.

The incremental nature of change in these narratives stems from the fact that, as official and societal actors become committed to a narrative, and as official actors and institutions become involved in the production of a narrative, support for the narrative becomes more entrenched.<sup>631</sup> As a result, it becomes more difficult to make a change that fundamentally breaks with the existing narrative. One example that highlights this pattern is the resolution passed by the Japanese Diet in 1995. While it was intended to be a groundbreaking statement of apology for Japan's aggression in WWII, conservative politicians and nationalist interest groups committed to the maintenance of the status quo mobilized to such an extent that the resolution that was actually passed by the Diet constituted little to no change in the content of the narrative. The Turkish case also illustrates how the production of a narrative over time has a 'lock-in' effect that serves to reinforce continuity. To use a counterfactual: it might have been possible for Turkish officials to dramatically change the content of the narrative in the shift from Phase One to Two, given that few officials or institutions were involved in the production of the narrative prior to 1980 and that citizens knew little to nothing about the genocide prior to their encounter with the official narrative that was developed in Phase Two. Once this shift was made, however, and officials had committed themselves and their credibility to the narrative that was developed

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<sup>630</sup> These insights are inspired by an article by the political scientist John Gentry (2006), which traces how the US military's commitment to upholding particular norms – of civilian casualty avoidance and force protection – has created vulnerabilities that adversaries have manipulated to their advantage in recent conflicts.

<sup>631</sup> In a somewhat similar vein, Hassner (2006/07) articulates several processes by which ideational factors contribute to the entrenchment of actors' commitment to a particular position in the context of territorial disputes.



in Phase Two, it became much more difficult – politically and cognitively – to make more dramatic changes in the content of the narrative. This point is supported by a statement made by a Turkish official in 1982, which is quoted in Chapter 4 but which I repeat here because of its salience. This diplomat declared: “Ten years ago we could have admitted there was some kind of massacre, but for some reason the Government decided not to. Now it’s too late” (Davidian and Ferchl 1982).

Closely related to the incremental nature of change in official narratives is the fact that changes that are made usually involve layering. *Layering* is a process of gradual change whereby new elements are gradually ‘layered’ onto or added to an existing institution or policy, while old elements remain alongside the new elements. This concept was first developed by Eric Schickler (2001) and was further conceptualized by Wolfgang Streeck and Kathleen Thelen in their (2005) edited volume on institutional change and continuity. As Streeck and Thelen note, layering is an incremental type of change, but over time it can lead to transformative results. In this process, because old elements are not eliminated or rejected, but instead are augmented with new policy elements, supporters of the old are much less likely to oppose the new elements. While this concept was developed to describe formal institutions, such as pension and labor market policies, it can be productively extended to the informal institution of an official narrative.

In the Japanese and Turkish cases, many themes in the content of each narrative continued across phases, and changes most often involved new nuances that were added to adjust to new pressures or to shift the content of the narrative without eliciting domestic opposition. In the Japanese case, the careful attention to the wording of official statements about the past illustrates the tendency for change to come in the form of layering rather than replacement or rejection. Over time, the key phrase used in official statements gradually shifted from regret, to remorse, to deep remorse, to apology, and finally to heartfelt apology. Similarly, the pool of victims acknowledged in official statements also gradually expanded. Moreover, shifts in the wording, framing and context of official statements often involved layering in order to avoid provoking too strong of a negative response from powerful domestic groups, which is consistent with the logic described in the paragraph above. In discussing the 1995 Diet resolution, Yamazaki notes that the phrases “‘colonial rule’ and ‘aggression,’” which had been controversially added to the official lexicon of remorse by Prime Minister Hosokawa in 1993, were, by 1995, accepted by conservatives and included in the 1995 Diet resolution (2006: 95). This example highlights how layering can lead to greater change (not necessarily in the Diet resolution, but in Murayama’s apology in August of the same year) that might not have been politically feasible if undertaken in more dramatic and abrupt steps.

The trajectory of the Turkish narrative also reflects the process of change through layering. As my analysis reveals, in each phase some new themes were added, some themes were slightly adjusted to accommodate new information or a change in the domestic or international context, while a majority of the themes continued unchanged from the previous phase. Through this layering process, the narrative appeared not to change, which was important for Turkish officials to maintain the legitimacy of the narrative among their domestic audience. At the same time, the content of the narrative also adapted to new pressures and circumstances, thereby continuing to resist pressures to change the narrative in more fundamental ways. For example, in the mid-1980s Turkish officials began to argue that the ‘Armenian question’ was an issue that should be

addressed by historians, not politicians, and that more research and an ‘objective’ and ‘unbiased’ analysis of the history was needed in order to be able to judge the nature of the events. This basic theme has continued to be an element of the narrative since then. However, as more historians have studied and written about the genocide, and especially as *Turkish* historians have begun to work on aspects of the ‘Armenian question,’ this theme was shifted to argue that all of the evidence has not yet been fully analyzed and that historians have not yet reached a ‘consensus’ about the events. In this shift, the underlying argument that this is an issue for historians, not politicians, has remained, but layered onto the older claim that more research was needed is a new claim that further *analysis* is needed in order for historians to be able ‘fully grasp’ the issue.

Moving beyond the scope of the two cases analyzed in this project, other cases – notably Germany and Austria’s narratives of the Holocaust – offer evidence that changes in official narratives of dark pasts are often characterized by layering. For example, the sociologist and memory studies scholar Jeffrey Olick (2007) identifies five commemorative periods in the trajectory of German’s collective memory about the Holocaust, but he notes that tropes from earlier periods are present in later periods, albeit adapted to match the passage of time and changes in the context. For instance, in 1985 the German Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker made a speech before the lower house of the German Parliament to commemorate the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the end of WWII. This speech was widely lauded for acknowledging and naming the full range of victims of Germany’s crimes in WWII, and for its degree of contrition and introspection. Olick notes how von Weizsäcker drew together prior themes about the war and Germany’s crimes, creating a new gestalt from preexisting strands of the collective memory. He writes: “The speech offered something for everyone – a catalogue of themes and images from previous commemorations – and provided a useful formula for future commemorations as the speech integrated previous solutions while avoiding their difficulties....von Weizsäcker made it seem unnecessary to choose among the alternatives that the prior discourse offered” (2007: 75).

### ***Future research directions***

Finally, I close this chapter by noting ways in which future research could build on this project.

#### *Explaining variations in international accountability*

One question for future research is why there are such variations in the application of international pressure on states that have violated international human rights norms, and what the implications of such variations are for the international system. In this project, I intentionally selected cases of states that have been subjected to significant international pressures, from various actors and at different points in time, in order to test competing hypotheses about the sources of change in states’ narratives. However, the international scrutiny and criticism of the past to which Turkey and Japan have been subjected is not the experience of all states with similarly dark pasts. This, then, presents several question: Why are some states repeatedly called on to come to terms with past atrocities, while others are allowed to fully participate in the international community with little to no pressure to address dark pasts? Or more abstractly: How and when are international norms upheld and maintained by states in the international system?

While scholarship on the emergence, diffusion and impact of international norms has developed significantly over the past fifteen years, questions about the maintenance of international norms remain. In particular, this literature does not sufficiently explain inconsistencies in norm maintenance, or the fact that many international norms persist in spite of glaring vicissitudes in international practices. Axelrod (1986: 1109) argues that in order to establish and induce adherence to norms, states should quickly and explicitly respond to other states' actions that violate or follow a desired behavior. More recently, Herrmann and Shannon (2001: 623) argued that established norms need to be protected in order to be preserved. In addition, other scholars have addressed the consequences of norm violations for violating states. For example, Price (1998) argues that non-adherents to institutionalized international norms must justify their deviant behavior, and Keck and Sikkink (1998) argue that international pressure is often brought to bear on norm-violating states. But the primary focus of this work has been on the role and influence of non-state, often transnational, actors. What is not clear, therefore, is how and why *states* react (or do not) when another state violates an international norm.

While we know that states are neither altruistic nor objective in their treatment of other states, future research might explore when and why states only selectively bring attention to other states' violations of international norms. My research suggests several possible explanations, namely: the power, location and degree of mobilization of victims of the human rights violation; the degree of mobilization of domestic actors within the norm-violating state, who then bring international attention to the issue (as Keck and Sikkink (1998) have argued); the power of the norm-violating state internationally; and the concerns and preferences of the norm-violating state's allies. Other possible explanations include: the egregiousness of the normative violation and the passage of time since the violation.

#### *Investigating gaps and interrelationships between multiple national narratives*

Another area of future research could build on the domestic dimensions of this project. This research has revealed that change in one national narrative can lead to pressure for change in another narrative within the same country, but it has also demonstrated that such causal connections are neither consistent nor straightforward. For example, in the Turkish context, several narratives have constituted the ideational core of Turkish national identity, including narratives about the 'Kurdish question,' the Turkish military, secularism and the role of Islam in Turkish society and politics, and the 'Armenian question.' As this project has shown, changes in the politics and narrative of the Kurdish question have affected both the actors who work on the Armenian question and the broader domestic context within which the narrative of the Armenian question is produced. And yet the two narratives have not shifted at similar times and to similar degrees. Likewise, in the Japanese case, at many points, changes in the narrative of the Nanjing Massacre shifted in conjunction with the narrative(s) of the colonization of Korea and the 'comfort women.' And yet at other points, shifts were made in the latter narrative(s) that were not paralleled by similar changes in the narrative of the Nanjing Massacre and the Second Sino-Japanese War.

Building on these observations, future research might investigate the inter-connections among different narratives within a single domestic context, asking: When a national narrative changes,

how/does it affect other national narratives? What is the relationship between the origins of key national narratives? Are there overlaps among the advocates and opponents of each? Most scholars typically focus on a single issue or narrative, as I have done in this project, so research looking at the matrix of national narratives within a single context could help uncover the ways in which state and non-state actors use and manipulate multiple national narratives for political ends, and whether and how different narratives within a single context threaten and/or reinforce each other. More broadly, such research could build on recent scholarship on the ongoing construction of nationalism (e.g., Shelef 2010) by probing the shifting architecture of ideas that shape national identity, and the contestation over those ideas by various groups within the nation.

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## Appendix 1: Textbooks Analyzed

### ***Phase One (1950 – 1980)***

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- Niyazi Akşit, *Lise Kitapları Tarih III Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1951).
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- Niyazi Akşit, *Lise Kitapları Tarih III Yeni ve Yakınçağlar* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1956).
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- Nurer Uğurlu and Dr. Esergöl Balcı, *Tarih Lise 3* (İstanbul: Serhat Yayınları A.Ş./Örgün Yayınları Ltd., 1989).
- Niyazi Akşit, *Tarih Lise III* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1990).
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### ***Phase Three (1994 – 2000)***

- Kenan Kalecikli, *Ders Geçme ve Kredi Sistemine Göre Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılâp Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük I* (İstanbul: Gendaş A.Ş., 1994).
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***Phase Four (from 2001)***

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## Appendix 2: Interviews Conducted

### *In Turkey:*

Author's interview with Turkish academic [T-1], Ankara, April 2008.  
Author's interview with civil society actor in Turkey [T-2], Istanbul, May 2008.  
Author's interview with Turkish businessman [T-3], Ankara, March 2009.  
Author's interview with activist in Turkey [T-4], Istanbul, May 2008.  
Author's interview with Turkish academic [T-5], Istanbul, May 2008.  
Author's interview with civil society actor [T-6], Ankara, April 2008.  
Author's interview with foreign diplomat [T-7], Ankara, April 2008.  
Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-8], Istanbul, April 2009.  
Author's interview with Turkish researcher [T-9], Ankara, April 2008.  
Author's interview [T-10], Istanbul, April 2009.  
Author's interview with Turkish academic [T-11], Istanbul, March 2009.  
Author's interview with intellectual in Turkey [T-12], Istanbul, May 2008.  
Author's interview with civil society actor [T-13], Istanbul, March 2009.  
Author's interview [T-14], Ankara, March 2009.  
Author's interview with civil society actor [T-15], Istanbul, May 2008.  
Author's interview with Turkish academic [T-16], Istanbul, April 2009.  
Author's interview with Turkish academic [T-17], Istanbul, March 2009.  
Author's interview with academic [T-18], Ankara, March 2009.  
Author's interview with civil society actor [T-19], Istanbul, May 2008.  
Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-20], Ankara, May 2008.  
Author's interview with civil society actor [T-21b], Istanbul, April 2009.  
Author's interview with researcher [T-22a], Istanbul, July 2007.  
Author's interview with researcher [T-22b], Istanbul, April 2009.  
Author's interview with historian at the Turkish Historical Society [T-23], Ankara, March 2009.  
Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24a], Ankara, May 2008.  
Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-24b], Ankara, March 2009.  
Author's interview with civil society actor [T-25], Istanbul, May 2008.  
Author's interview with Turkish businessman [T-26], Ankara, March 2009.  
Author's interview with a Turkish political scientist [T-27], Ankara, May 2008.  
Author's interview with EU diplomat [T-28], Ankara, March 2009.  
Author's interview with high-level Turkish official [T-29], Ankara, March 2009.  
Author's interview with civil society actor in Turkey [T-30], Istanbul, April 2009.  
Author's interview with retired Turkish diplomat [T-31], Istanbul, April 2009.  
Author's interview with intellectual in Turkey [T-32], Istanbul, May 2008.  
Author's interview with Turkish academic [T-33], Istanbul, May 2008.  
Author's interview with researcher [T-34], Ankara, March 2009.  
Author's interview with researcher [T-35], Ankara, March 2009.  
Author's interview with researcher [T-36], Ankara, March 2009.  
Author's interview with a political scientist [T-37], Istanbul, May 2008.  
Author's interview with foreign civil society actor [T-38], Istanbul, April 2008.  
Author's interview with researcher and civil society actor [T-39], Istanbul, May 2008.

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Author's interview with Turkish academic [T-42], Istanbul, May 2008.  
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Author's interview with Armenian-American leader [US-2], Boston area, October 2009.  
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Author's interview with a former senior official of the Japanese Foreign Ministry [J-3], Tokyo, July 2008.  
Author's interview with foreign diplomat [J-4], Tokyo, July 2008.  
Author's interview with leftist textbook activist [J-5], Tokyo, July 2008.  
Author's interview with a representative of Japan Conference, which is a nationalist interest group [J-6], Tokyo, July 2008.  
Author's interview with revisionist textbook activist [J-7], Tokyo, July 2008.  
Author's interview (anonymous) [J-8], Tokyo, July 2008.  
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